

Developing an Action Plan

In this module we provide you with information to develop a specific plan of action for your work as an MMI. Action planning typically includes deciding who is going to do what, by when, and in what order will you or the group reach your goals. Another word for it is a “work plan.” The design and implementation of the action plan depend on the nature and needs of your congregation and conference/region. One of biggest challenges in action planning is to actually implement the plan. Action planning may seem detailed and tedious. It requires a grounding in the day-to-day realities of your time and talents as an MMI volunteer and the congregations and region/conferences in which you are seeking to interpret the work of Global Ministries.

Getting Started

As you begin the process of developing an action plan, you will want to think about what skills, gifts, passions, comfort levels, and availability you bring to your role as an MMI. It is important to first know yourself before you consider any goals you want to accomplish.

As you continue in this time of reflection, here are some other things to consider:

- **Know your context:** Where are people in their understanding of our global mission involvement and what will need to be done to help them take the next step?
- **Be realistic:** You can only do so much. Decide where you can have the greatest impact.
- **Have faith:** On the other hand, God can open doors for opportunities beyond your expectations. Ground your interpretation work in prayerful trust.
- **Think of some board goals:** What are the priorities of the board you want to focus on as a mission interpreter?
- **Formulate measurable objectives:** The result you want to achieve can be clearly articulated in the objective.
- **Timeframe:** Think about the best time to accomplish each of your objectives.
- **Work within existing structures:** Consult your pastor and region/conference staff to ask them how you might best work with them as an MMI.
- **Consult other MMIs in your area:** Remember to contact other MMIs in your area to see what they are doing as MMIs and talk about how you might work together.

In Appendix H-1 you will find several copies of an action plan template created for your work as an MMI. As a minimum requirement, we ask you to formulate three interpretation goals for the next year. We invite you to then determine several measurable objectives for each of the goals, with appropriate dates for accomplishing those objectives. You may choose to identify more than three goals. The additional copies of the action plan template can be used to formulate as many goals as you can comfortably handle. You will want to review your goals and objectives on an annual basis to see how you did, and to re-formulate another action plan for the coming year. In this way you can build on your progress year after year. In the rest of this module, we will provide information which will help you develop your first action plan.

Three Critical Goals with Possible Objectives

The Ministries and Mission Interpreters team has developed three critical goals to consider as you develop your action plan. These goals relate to the priorities of the Mission Education and Advocacy strategic plan. They are suggested as a place to begin your work as an MMI and will be a great help to Global Ministries as we hope to have church members, congregations, regions, conferences and other constituencies grow in their understanding of God’s mission, engaging faithfully and effectively in that mission globally with the “acompañamiento” of Global Ministries.

At the heart of mission are people relating to people, sharing the good news of God's love. Each of the three critical goals is relational - people relating to people, sharing this good news through mission interpretation. Remember, a goal is a broad statement of what you want to do and an objective is a measurable statement of how you will accomplish the goal.

1. Goal: Promote the *Be a Global Mission Church* initiative in your context.

Possible Objectives:

- Contact ten congregations to explain the *Be a Global Mission Church* initiative and get the booklet into the hands of the pastor and/or mission chair.
- Give five *Be a Global Mission Church* presentations starting in your local congregation. (PowerPoint is available.)
- See at least three congregations create an action plan and commit to being a *Global Mission Congregation*. (We can give you a certificate that you can present to the congregations in Sunday worship.)
- Arrange a meeting with the regional/conference minister and/or staff to share about the *Be a Global Mission Church* initiative and to brainstorm about what it might look like for your region/conference to be identified as a Global Mission region/conference.

2. Goal: Recruit and/or train additional MMIs in your context.

Possible Objectives:

- Host a day-long MMI training at your church for the mission/outreach committee, pastor and other interested members in global mission. (In Appendix H-2 you will find a commissioning service that can be used following the training.)
- Arrange a meeting with the regional/conference minister and/or staff to talk about the possibility of hosting a region/conference MMI training for mission chairs and pastors of all UCC and Disciples congregations in the entire region/conference, or certain geographic areas. (When these people are trained they can then host a training in their individual congregation.)
- Identify three key people who would make good MMIs in your region/conference and who are spread out geographically to cover the different clusters of churches; submit their names to the MMI training team for an invitation to the next national MMI event.
- Identify youth/young adults from your region/conference who would be interested in serving as a youth/young adult MMI, and communicate their names to the MMI training team to be an invited to an youth/young adult MMI training.

3. Goal: Share resources and opportunities to engage in global mission in your context. (In Appendix G-1, you will find a list of resources and an order form.) Possible Objectives:

- Ask all the members of your congregation to fill out a yellow card so that they will receive regular Global Ministries updates and two postal mailings a year.
- Help your congregation to use the monthly mission bulletin stories in their newsletter and/or the weekly prayer in Sunday worship.
- Start or revitalize a global mission/advocacy committee in your congregation.

- Use the Connecting Threads DVD and Study Guide in your congregation by hosting a seven session Sunday School class for adults or youth.
- Recruit and send two church members to Ecumenical Advocacy days in Washington D.C.
- Develop a missionary relationship at your congregation and host a missionary visit.
- Get your congregation to sponsor a child, or give to a special project through Global Ministries.
- Organize a People-to-People Pilgrimage group mission trip from your congregation to visit a Global Ministries international partner church or organization.
- Help your congregation, region/conference to develop a global mission page on their website which links to the Global Ministries website and provides stories and news updates.
- Staff a Global Ministries display at your conference annual meeting or regional assembly.

These three critical goals and possible objectives are at the heart of our work in Mission Education and Advocacy. You can participate in that work by incorporating them into your action plan in a way which corresponds to your gifts, passions and availability. We consider you an extension of our staff team and are privileged to work with you as you draft and refine your action plan and then return home to carry it out.

Other Avenues for Action

In the rest of this module we will give you some additional avenues for action as a resource to consider in this action planning process. You may want to develop several action plans with goals in different areas and on various levels. Here are some ideas for those goals:

Your personal interpretation goals:

- Expanded **faith understanding** - How will you deepen your Biblical basis for mission? People need to be reminded of the reason for mission.
- Expanded **knowledge** - How will you gain new awareness of global issues? Consider your language skills, your biases and prejudices that could be addressed.
- Expanded **commitment** - What are your passions for global mission?
- How will you **serve in God's mission** now and in the future?
- Expanded **communication** - who will you contact via letters, phone, e-mail? How will you tell the Global Ministries story in multi-media form?

Your local congregation goals:

- **As Mission Trainer:**

Equip others to tell the story of mission.

- **As Mission Interpreter:**

Help pastors and mission committees to start or be more effective in mission outreach.

Help local churches develop and conduct world mission celebrations and events.

- **As Mission Facilitator:**

Arrange for staff or missionary visits to local churches.

Facilitate mission activities such as trips, work-camps and support for partnerships.

- **As Mission Steward:**

Stimulate basic support of OGHS/Week of Compassion, planned or special giving.

Your conference/region goals:

- Offer an annual update to the conference/region Board of Directors.
- Assist with global mission partnership development or maintenance.
- Provide conference/region annual meeting presence, presentations, resolutions and displays.
- Check the Resource Center for up-to-date Global Ministries resources.
- Support conference/region Basic Support - Where does your conference/region stand with respect to others?
- Submit to the conference/region newsletter information about Global Ministries.
- Facilitate global mission input for newsletters, or gather oral histories of mission.
- Facilitate conference/region and national recognition of individuals and groups who support mission.
- Facilitate missionary, global visitor and Global Ministries staff visits to local churches.
- Understand and participate in how spending and action decisions are made and how minority interests are represented and heard.

Inter-church, inter-denominational and inter-faith global mission in your community:

- Discover global mission concerns such as child advocacy, environmental, or peace concerns, which may unite local churches of different denominations or different faith groups.
- Explore local concerns with a global context such as immigration or trade balance, which may motivate inter-denominational interfaith advocacy or action.
- Contact nearby seminaries that may be interested in developing mission education programs or hosting visiting missionaries.

Your mission stewardship goals:

- Money - how can you help raise the funds needed?
- Recognition - how can you celebrate and endorse stewardship action?

Avenues for Action - Working With a Mission Committee

The local church mission committee is a vital link in mission. The more the local congregation is involved in mission, the more effective the whole church's mission will be. One of the most effective ways to involve a local congregation in mission is for a group of committed persons to provide leadership and interpretation on mission issues. These ideas may be helpful if you serve on your church's mission committee, or are asked to make suggestions for another church.

1. Every meeting should have an agenda. Invite speakers representing various aspects of mission to give short talks or audio visual presentations, and allow time for questions and discussion. Hand out "Be a Global Mission Church" booklets.
2. Invite others active in the congregation—deacons, trustees, the treasurer, Sunday School personnel, group leaders—to attend mission committee meetings to learn with you and from you.
3. Compile a list of individuals knowledgeable and experienced in mission to address men's, women's, youth, senior citizens', and other interested groups in your church.
4. Write brief reports of mission committee activities for the church newsletter. Publicize upcoming activities such as special events or fundraising drives. When results of such activities are in, print a report and thank people as appropriate.
5. Use your knowledge of the church's wider mission to influence the setting of the budget in your local church.
6. Work with your local church's finance committee to determine appropriate ways for the mission committee to help support the budget.
7. Encourage committee members to attend conference or region mission seminars.
8. Consider an extensive Global Awareness Program for your church. Use the "Be a Global Mission Church" booklet.
9. Write your own "mission moments," using material of interest to your congregation, such as local or conference/region mission projects, areas with which members of the congregation have had special relationships, or from your own experience.
10. Provide mission material for Sunday bulletins or newsletters.
11. Incorporate monthly mission stories into Sunday worship.
12. Promote special offerings with the appropriate persons in your congregation: One Great Hour of Sharing, Week of Compassion, and other Disciples and UCC special offerings.
13. Promote support of the UCC's Our Church's Wider Mission and Disciples Mission Fund.
14. Celebrate mission at regular times during the year.

Avenues for Action - Outreach Activities for the Local Congregation

In Your Church's Group Activities

- Show Global Ministries DVDs/videos.
- Visit a local mission project and report to interested church groups or to the whole congregation.
- Have mission committee members visit the church school to talk about mission. OGHS/WOC provides a good opportunity and resources for this.
- Sponsor a mission weekend. Invite someone knowledgeable and experienced in mission, such as a missionary. Have a church-wide supper with your guest. Invite your visitor to speak at the Sunday service or other gathering. Introduce your visitor to interested groups: study groups, youth groups, church school, finance committee, etc.

Link Your Congregation to the Global Church Partnerships

- Put up a mission bulletin board. Put bulletin boards in high traffic areas. Display notices, pictures, fliers, including overseas recruitment information.
- Write brief reports of your congregation's successful mission activities for your conference/region newspaper. Send photographs when appropriate.
- Send ideas for mission committees to Bob Shebeck or Jan Aerie.
- Plan to establish emergency response procedures with appropriate persons in case of foreign or domestic disaster.

Connecting Your Congregation to the World

- Establish a missionary relationship. Contact the Office of Missionary Relationships who will link you with a missionary or missionary couple working in an area of interest to your congregation. Once a relationship is established, exchange letters with your missionary. When your missionary returns on home assignment, arrange for a visit, and if a member of your congregation travels near where your missionary is stationed, ask your traveler to visit the missionary and report to the congregation.
- Create a Global Mission partnership with a church or association in another country. Use the *Partnership Handbook* to follow the step by step guide to formalizing this relationship, available at: <http://globalministries.org/get-involved/church-to-church-partnerships/Revised-GCP-Handbook-for-web.doc>
- Contact the People-to-People Pilgrimages program to plan an overseas trip.
- Sponsor a refugee family for resettlement in your community. Contact the UCC or Disciples Refugee Resettlement Office.
- Sponsor a child through the Global Ministries Child Sponsorship Program.

Avenues for Action - Conference/Region Representation

- You must study your conference/region structure in order to identify and cultivate the decision makers.
- Work with the stewardship and mission committee. If none exists, work toward establishing a committee or task force. A central focus is needed to keep a wider view of mission.
- Suggest creative ways that the national staff can assist in your conference/region. Report achievements in establishing a global viewpoint in your conference/region.

Mission Visitors and Delegates

- Publish a list of local mission visitors: interpreters, MMIs, board members, former missionaries, and those with mission-related overseas travel experience.
- Plan for mission visits by missionaries, staff, and other mission interpreters. Urge the conference/region to request assignment of missionaries. Offer to help arrange for effective utilization of mission visits.

Conference/Region Newspaper

- Get to know the editor and help him/her work toward reflecting a global viewpoint in the paper.
- Encourage the use of stories from the Global Ministries News or website.
- Submit stories yourself.
- Feature mission personalities, emphasizing the new models in mission, including missionaries-in-residence who come from overseas. Focus on those serving overseas who are connected to your conference/region.
- Invite local persons to write stories after visits to an overseas mission.
- Publicize overseas opportunities for service and GM-sponsored study tours.
- Regularly report results of OCWM/DMF and OGHS/WOC response with appropriate praise.
- Following a disaster, tell how Global Ministries responded.
- Publish models of successful mission promotion and of generous stewardship support.

Conference/Region Office Bulletin Board

- Request opportunities to use the bulletin board. Be creative. See that world mission is visible.
- Use a visual display in spring for One Great Hour of Sharing or Week of Compassion.
- Hang up a display board and mission photos.

Conference/Region Outreach

- Plan a tour to a mission site, and plan for reporting to churches.
- Urge a mission emphasis and stewardship education in the conference/regional camping program.
- Encourage local churches to establish mission and stewardship committees.
- Plan mission workshops in cooperation with other groups in the conference/region: Hunger Task Force, Women's Fellowship, Children/Youth Group, Men's Group.
- Coordinate an audio-visual festival with appropriate resources from Global Ministries.
- Offer resource items for use by local churches, e.g., placemats, mission bulletin inserts, stories and bookmarks.

Avenues for Action - Conference Annual Meeting/Regional Assembly

The Program:

- Plan to use the mission moment videos on the Global Ministries website to bring the face of mission and its current topics to your congregation.
- Work toward always having a Ministries and Mission Interpreter on the program planning committee.
- Suggest a well-thought-out global mission emphasis. A speaker may be a key part of your plan, but work toward having the whole meeting reflect global concerns.
- Work with the conference/region stewardship and mission committees to ensure that at least one segment of the meeting looks outward to the world.
- Provide models for local stewardship and mission committees. Perhaps a local church mission committee could prepare this.
- Arrange to insert short mission moments in the printed program, present from a microphone, or by using an overhead projector.
- Plan a meal with a world-oriented program; perhaps a "meager meal" with savings going to a Global Ministries Special Project.
- Make world mission evident through items used by the delegates: packets, nametags, buttons, pencils, notepads, pens, bookmarks, placemats.
- Arrange for the introduction of all missionaries, retired staff, and those serving on other national boards.
- Honor retired missionaries.
- Have a "town meeting" to answer questions about mission.
- Create and present a Global Ministries skit.
- Include in the delegate's packets: OCWM/DMF information; world mission facts and highlights, a list of mission visitors available in the conference/region, Global Ministries News and information about world mission events for displays.

Displays:

- Work with the display area coordinator to get a good location. Use your portable display.
- Put a knowledgeable person on duty in the display area. A good sales person can help delegates understand needs and stimulate the sharing of ideas.
- Be creative and visual. E-mail the Global Ministries Mission Education office for available resources.
- Use current photos, videos or taped messages from staff and missionaries.
- A hanging display gains quick notice in a crowded room. Suspend a globe, a colorful banner or an eye-catching mobile in a prominent place.
- Have visuals or mini-displays in unexpected places. The cafeteria line is an excellent place to talk up mission. Don't forget parking lots, entry ways, and restrooms.

Avenues for Action - Overseas Personnel Recruitment

Global Ministries is actively seeking people to serve overseas with partner churches and institutions, especially persons of color.

Effective missionaries are ordinary people with an extraordinary combination of qualities and qualifications, including:

1. Deep Christian faith, commitment and the ability to express it appropriately.
2. An open, flexible, non-dogmatic approach to persons and situations.
3. Skill and training appropriate to the specific position to be filled. In education, a college degree is needed in almost every case.
4. Sufficient experience to demonstrate competence.
5. Sufficient maturity to demonstrate an ability to cope with a cross-cultural experience.
6. Willingness to learn another language and enter into another culture.
7. Common sense and the ability to cope in unexpected circumstances.

In your conference/region

1. Suggest that the conference/region distribute copies of "Overseas Opportunities."
2. Make announcements of needs; arrange a recruitment table and displays of materials at meetings.
3. Write about overseas opportunities for the conference/regional paper, newsletters, etc. Seek speaking engagements at colleges and seminaries to promote mission and missionary vocations.
4. Urge ministers to make opportunities known.
5. Urge conference/region committees to take responsibility for recruiting.
6. Encourage missionaries on home assignment and former missionaries to discuss their motivation for overseas work.
7. Encourage commissioning services for new mission personnel, and invite potential candidates.
8. Encourage mission vocations among youth, students, Peace Corps returnees, and potential volunteers.
9. Show the recruitment video "God's Surprise: the New Faces of Mission."

Avenues for Action - Conference/Region Coordinator

In areas where several Ministries and Mission Interpreters are assigned, the regional coordinator is appointed by the group of Ministries and Mission Interpreters to be available to the interpreters for nurture, support and guidance in carrying out their responsibilities.

Responsibilities:

1. The primary responsibility of the coordinator to the interpreters within the conference/region is to...
 - a. be in communication on a regular basis with the interpreters in the conference/region.
 - b. nurture and support the members.
 - c. facilitate the implementation of the plans made at the MMI training and throughout the year.
 - d. enable each interpreter to carry out their individual responsibilities in the area and churches to which they are assigned.
2. Be available as a liaison between the conference/region staff, missionaries, board members and interpreters.
3. Establish a relationship with the conference/region through the minister or staff person assigned to mission and stewardship.
4. Assure mission visibility at annual meetings and ordering of resource materials for annual meetings.
5. Facilitate and execute the development of a strategy using Global Ministries interpreters and resources.
6. Be in communication with persons who represent various aspects of the mission of the denomination within the area.
7. Evaluate the work of the interpreters and the programs within the conference/region, communicating this information to the staff contact.

Conclusion

A strategy – an action plan – is important for moving toward a systematic, continuing program of education for mission and stewardship. The purpose of such a plan should go far beyond generating an immediate interest and response that will not continue unless constantly "refueled." It should enable persons to become world Christians with love and concern for all God's human family, and with a renewed and deepened personal sense of God's mission. You will want to review your action plan often and on a yearly basis create a new one. Here is a list that you might want to come back to periodically to encourage you in the process:

Plan ahead.

Start early.

Set measurable goals – challenging but obtainable.

Decide what should be done to achieve the goals.

Decide who will do what to achieve the goals. Enlist the aid of all the talented folk you can.

Do it!

Build a system to follow up.

Don't wait.

Nag!

Action not words!

Regroup as necessary.

Love and forgive the one who failed to carry out promises.

Don't procrastinate.

Celebrate your achievement.

Evaluate so next time will be better.

Put it in writing for the future.

Please be sure to complete the training evaluation form which is Appendix H-3 and return it to your trainer. Thank you!

The Action Plan

To help you plan your ministries and mission interpretation

Goals

What are three major goals you wish to accomplish?

(Goals are to be a broad overview.)

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Objectives

What needs to be done in order to accomplish these goals?

(Objectives are to be measurable and specific.)

Date: _____ **Objectives for Goal 1:**

a.

b.

c.

Date: _____ **Objectives for Goal 2:**

a.

b.

c.

Date: _____ **Objectives for Goal 3:**

a.

b.

c.

Now place a targeted completion date next to each objective.

Name _____

Local Congregation _____

Conference/Region _____ Today's Date _____

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APPENDIX H-1

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Now place a targeted completion date next to each objective.

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Conference/Region _____ Today's Date _____

APPENDIX H-1

MINISTRIES AND MISSION INTERPRETERS TRAINING

A Service of Commissioning

These hands do a lot of work.
Look at my generous hands.
You can see the marks of my work.
See the strength... see the pain.
This is how I live.
This is what my hands give.
Show me your hands.
Your hands are generous too.
What is your work, your strength, your pain?
How do you live?
What do your hands give?
– *Christian Aid, Haiti*

GATHERED AS MEMBERS OF THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Call to Worship

One: Sisters, brothers, children of God, gather 'round, gather 'round.
Bring your joy, bring your sorrow... raise your voice, raise your spirit...
share your faith, share your doubt... offer your heart, offer yourself...

All: O God, give me a clean heart, so I may serve you.

One: Sisters, brothers, children of God, gather 'round, gather 'round... worship the One
who renews us and calls us to serve others in the name of Christ Jesus.

All: O God, I offer myself as a faithful witness to your love in Jesus Christ.

Hymn: Somos Uno en Cristo

(493 Chalice)

GOD SPEAKS ANEW

Scripture reading:

Reflection:

Hymn: Called as Partners in Christ's Service

(453 Chalice/495 New Century)

GATHERED AROUND THE TABLE

One: Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star, we thank you for your constant love for all you have made.

All: We thank you for your sustaining hand of life and for the many and diverse people who live in this wondrous village we call mother earth.

One: We thank you for your gift of the Christ who entered our village, spoke words of truth, revealed your love, and offered himself as a living sacrifice for us.

All: Blessed by Christ's love, and gifted by the presence of your Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves in service at this table.

One: Today, people come from east and west, north and south to share this holy meal.

"In the Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), we do not use grape juice and bread as you do in the west. Grapes and flour do not grow in our country. Instead, we use kool-aid and rice cakes to represent the blood and body of our Christ."

"Our congregation, the Protestant Church in Fiji, is small and poor. We cannot afford bread from a store or imported grape juice for communion. So, we break bread made from manioc and share a cup of pineapple juice. These are elements of life for us."

"In the Lutheran Church in France, we gather in a circle around our pastor. She gives each of us a wafer with the cross stamped on it and then we share a common cup of wine."

"Like many churches in Latin America, ours in Mexico is unable to purchase bread and wine. For our communion service, women prepare tortillas and children bring water from the village well. We find the living Christ in the cup of water which we share."

Words of Institution:

One: We find the living Christ here at this table. In this bread broken for us... in this cup poured out for us... we share a holy meal – to bless us, to sustain us, to challenge us, to empower us.

All: Amen!

Hymn: En Viado soy de Dios

One: You are invited to come forward to share in this joyful sacrament of renewal. Bring a copy of your mission action plan and place it as an offering in the basket on the table. Break off a piece of bread and dip it in the cup. Then receive a Global Ministries pin and a stole as a sign of your commissioning.

All: This is the joyful feast of the people of God – you and me!

One: The gifts of God for the people of God.

All: All the people. Amen!

COMMISSIONED AS MINISTRIES AND MISSION INTERPRETERS

One: You have shared your mission action plan; we have been fed at this table. Now you have received a Global Ministries pin to affirm your commitment to be Ministries and Mission Interpreters of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). With God's help will you seek to be an advocate for our common effort to embody the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the globe?

All: We will, with the help of God!

One: Will you interpret the work of those in mission, sharing the stories of lives healed, renewed, and transformed?

All: We will, with the help of God!

One: Will you humbly speak and live your faith in the fullness of Christ's love?

All: We will, with the help of God!

One: Thuma Mina – send me Jesus!

All: Sengya Vuma – lead me Jesus!

Hymn: "Thuma Mina"

(447 Chalice/360 New Century)

Benediction

Passing the Peace

Evaluation

Ministries and Mission Interpreters Training

In what ways did the training meet your expectations?

What did you find most helpful?

What did you find least helpful?

Which aspects of training in interpretation would you like to spend more time in the future?

Any names of persons in your conference/region or congregation who you would recommend attend a Ministries and Mission Interpreters training session?

Comments or questions:

Please return or email to:

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OR

Bob Shebeck, PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206 bshebeck@dom.disciples.org