

International HR Forum event, 17 May 2016***Don't forget your toothbrush! Are your mission partners prepared to go?*****Quotes – transcript of video presentation**

We [GC] spoke to mission workers from a range of organisations... we asked them what the most useful piece of advice had been pre-departure and what they wished they had been told but weren't...

Question 1: What was the most useful thing you were told before you went?

Voice 1: I mostly feel that if someone had told me that no matter how prepared I was, no matter how well trained I was, there would be times when I felt that I had no idea what I was doing; and I wouldn't understand what was going on around me; and I would wonder why I was there. But that's normal. It's OK.

**"I know we've already told you, you will be living in an earthquake zone.
We really mean it – be prepared."**

Voice 2: I think it was the fact there would be cross-cultural challenges, not just when facing a new country, but actually being and living and working amongst an expat team. So the fact that we all come from different backgrounds but are all expected to work together for a common purpose can actually be quite challenging.

"Don't compare yourself and your standard of living with other mission workers."

Voice 3: One thing that I'm really glad that we knew before we went to X is that it would take a while to transition into our main role and really feel useful. It was really good to know so that we were a lot less frustrated.

"That there would be times when I'd think, "What am I doing here and what difference am I really making for the Kingdom of God?""

Voice 4: The most useful I was told before we came out was that the relationship with the overseas personnel would probably create the greatest challenge than the relationships with those of the locals.

"Have plenty of downloaded music or audio books for the long bus journeys."

Voice 5: Watch and learn before you change anything.

"Don't be surprised if you only achieve one thing in a day."

Voice 6: I'm thankful to have been told that even something that doesn't seem logical to me does have logic behind it.

"Make space for nurturing your marriage as you may experience stresses on your relationship."

Voice 7: I'm so glad that I learnt before coming here that it's OK to occasionally spend money on things that would be considered standard, or basic, back in the UK but which may potentially be seen as extravagant here in Y.

"The best footwear for Nepal is that which keeps your feet and toes above the height of the dust and garbage on the streets."

Voice 8: I'm really thankful that someone told me to think really hard about expectations and write them all down so that I would have fewer surprises.

Question 2: What do you really wish somebody had told you before you went?

Voice 1: I wish that people within my organisation had told me more about their resources that were available within our organisation – like I later found out about a lot of helpful resources that were there, but I didn't know about them ahead of time. And it was hard once I was on the field to figure out who to contact about things, and how to get help when I needed it.

“We can survive on a lot less than we brought.”

Voice 2: I wish I knew before I came out was to arrange regular breaks, over the weekend, probably three or four times a year outside of the city that we're working in.

“Although your students are studying for English medium degrees some of them will speak no English.”

Voice 3: I wish someone had told me to be patient with myself once I get there.

“Your ability to learn a new language will vary from day to day according to how you are feeling.”

Voice 4: I wish somebody had told me how difficult language study was going to be. How long it's going to take. How stupid you feel. And how you feel like a child every day because you don't know what's going on and how to say things you thought you could say.

“I needed to bring enough underwear to last 2 years of harsh detergent washed before I could get back to buy new supplies.”

Voice 5: It would have been helpful if somebody had said to me that as a new person I didn't have to have it all together – that everyone feels like that sometimes.

“You get through a lot of insect repellent and can't buy it here.”

Voice 6: Learn the language. Know more about the culture. And know more about practical things like how to pay income tax.

“A large plastic cape is better than a waterproof jacket in a monsoon downpour.”

Voice 7: One thing that I wish we had known is that we would be able to serve in lots of ways beyond our main roles – and in a community like X where there are lots of people, there are loads of opportunities. So that's been really good.

“We wished we had known that certain shipping companies were such crooks – adding so many charges and making life difficult.”

Voice 8: I really wish that I had known before coming that there would be times when I'd think what on earth am I doing here and what difference am I making for the Kingdom of God.

“It's very rare to find or be able to buy footwear above size 4 in Nepal!!”

“There is a close correlation between missionary retention and the quality and length of preparation” – ReMAP 2