Taking Risks

In one sense it is impossible to manage risk. We can't cover all of the things that can go wrong. But we do have seven things that we must keep in mind about risk.

1. ***Remember that Jesus rewards risk.*** Long before accountants noticed the market rewards risk, Jesus promised to reward those who risk for Him (Matt 6:25-33).

2. ***Remember that there are no guarantees.*** Life is a risk. But taking some simple precautions like using safe airlines and partnering with local people who advise us on safety issues is a real plus. We also make sure all participants have good insurance.

3. ***All of life involves risk, but we don't look for risk either.*** Thrill seeking is not a part of missions. There are plenty of thrills on a mission trip without manufacturing them.

4. ***When we do need to risk, we risk on things that are worth it.*** Sometimes that means spiritual realities the world simply cannot see; sometimes it means doing things that will build trust. Sometimes we eat risky food to build trust, for instance.

5. ***Manage risk by training yourself to do three things: be alert, be knowledgeable, and be wise.*** Watch what is going on around you. What are the implications? Think through the things you can do to reduce risk at no expense to cultural sensitivity. Again, we have partnerships with those who can guide us - remember that in cross-cultural situations we are as lambs among wolves.

   We also have clear, wise rules for team members like: be in before dark; walk in groups; limit luggage, personal articles, and spending money; don't flash your wealth; do not take expensive cameras…single use, digital cameras are preferred.

6. ***When something bad happens - and something bad will likely happen - be calm and compliant.*** Remember that there are no guarantees in life. That's true for a trip across the globe or down the street to the grocery store. When things do go wrong, give yourself a break. There's no sense heaping guilt on top of mistakes. Know that God is honored by your risk for Him.

7. ***We don't want to make the focus of your trip eliminating or managing risk.*** What a boring trip! Don't make it the focus of your return either. We've endured too many short-term reports that focused entirely on how bad or dangerous or disgusting things were with no hint of God's work. We call them the "biggest bug" stories. No wonder so many short-termers go and are surprised God was there before they were.

** Taken from "Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions, "Intervarsity Press*