

## Planning a Trip Abroad

By Jesse Kennedy

The first and most important decision is where to go for your nursing mission abroad. I recommend that you begin your decision making process by gathering together all of the students interested making the trip. Find out what experiences you are looking to find and what areas of the world your members are interested in visiting.

There are a few important issues to consider when choosing your destination. The most important consideration is safety. Make absolutely sure that there are no travel advisories for any areas you are considering. You can find a full list of United States Government travel advisories, a link is provided under the chapter resources tab of the [oregonsna.org](http://oregonsna.org) website. Another important consideration is the scope of practice you will be able to perform in country. Each country has different guidelines for out of country medical practitioners. The final consideration is the amount of time you will be able to spend in country versus the amount of travel needed to accomplish your mission. A good time to make the trip is during Winter break. The time of year you travel depends greatly on your class schedule, it is a good idea to ensure that there are multiple cohorts attending the trip for continuity.

Once you have a solid list of possible destinations, begin a series of votes that eliminate one or two destinations each round of voting until you come to a final round between two destinations. This is a good way to ensure that all voices are heard, but a solid consensus is eventually achieved on the destination.

One issue that always comes up when making a trip abroad is, “why work abroad rather than her in the states?” There are several benefits to working abroad including the cultural diversity benefits derived from cultural immersion, learning the ability to work in emergent settings with limited resources and witnessing different healthcare systems in action. One way to address this issue head on is to

remind your detractors of the direct benefit you are providing to the community during your events. Our goal is not to make money or simply go on a vacation, rather the goal of abroad trips is to make a difference in the world, create life-long relationships and find new ways to improve the health of your community. We learned invaluable insights into the ability to provide care in a non-judgmental and tolerant environment. In order to do our jobs as nurses, we have to be able to quickly build rapport and learn how to read body language to be able to get to the root of the health problem.

One way to ensure that all of your team members are going for the right reasons and reassure your critics is to create a contract that each member must abide by. The contract I have written is found under chapter resources on the [oregonsna.org](http://oregonsna.org) website. I believe that the contract focused the members on what is the most important denominator for the trip and the preparations for it. More importantly, the contract helped to prepare people for the dire conditions and extreme situations we encountered.

Be sure to start sending out letters requesting donations early and keep sending them. Ideally, you want to send them out before the end of the fiscal year, but that isn't always possible so be absolutely sure that you at least send the letter. A sample letter is also found under the chapter resources tab of the [oregonssna.org](http://oregonssna.org) website. You have to sell your dream and vision about the trip to your potential sponsors. Let them know how motivated and driven you are to make this once in a lifetime trip become a reality.

There are so many more things to say about preparing for a trip abroad, so I will keep uploading more documents as I have time. Thanks for reading!