

PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES PRE-LAUNCH PLANNING REPORT

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RESPONSE IS A COMPILATION OF THE WRITINGS SUBMITTED BY THE OCT 2024 DUBAI TEAM!

1. **In a brief sentence for each of the five CAN GO criteria, what is the latest update concerning each: Champion/s, Affirmation, Need, Gifting, and Opportunity/Openness.**
 - **Champion:** The members of the prayer team will act as champions within EFC-ER as they travel back to their home churches. Every member of the team came away with a heart to see workers sent to Dubai.
 - **Affirmation:** A consistent confirmation from various individuals in various ministries confirm that our intent to come alongside an existing ministry is needed in Dubai.
 - i. Indonesian church confirms it
 - ii. Fellowship pastors confirm it
 - iii. Nepalese church confirms it
 - **Need:** I believe Dubai is truly fertile soil for the Gospel and potentially the hub for UAE missions work. I sense an effective ministry for Friends in Dubai.
 - i. Training individuals who return to their homeland to plant disciple making communities. If we use the terminology "church planters" it may carry unnecessary weight for those returning. Since Dubai is no longer term home for any foreigner and foreigner do not want to return home, the training should be focus on "establishing disciple making communities in your next location".
 - ii. Disciple making under the umbrella of existing ministry.
 - iii. Hub for a mission field in the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula - maybe the whole of the Middle East
 - **Gifting:**
 - i. Teaching – equipping to establish disciple making communities
 - ii. Faith – projecting what the Lord can do through you.
 - iii. Flexibility – adjusting to structure and methodologies that are not familiar
 - **Opportunity:**
 - i. Send potential interns to Fellowship Church.
 1. They need interns. Eight pastors are a church of 4,000 – 5,000. Last year they had baptism 50 of the 52 weeks. Growing fast.
 2. They would provide cultural understanding from the context of a local church.
 3. They do not a have training for establishing disciple making communities for those who return to their homeland.
 4. They expressed interest. Both sides will have to explore alignment topics.

- ii. Connect with a local church to establish church plants throughout the UAE. (Currently, I do not sense this is our first action.)
- iii. Send a professional (non-religious) to work in Dubai. They serve in the church to prepare individuals to establish disciple making communities wherever they go. This would be the ideal visa scenario.

2. Compelling conviction to launch (to build just a short paragraph on top of the CAN GO summary). What is the compelling picture that is worth giving our lives or the lives of our sons and daughters to? How might these peoples or places look different because we paid the price to take holistic Good News? What words would sharpen our Help Wanted sign for this new field?

- If you are sensing a call of God to go to the nations but do not know where to go, then Dubai is the place to go. The nations are in Dubai. Potential of impacting many nations by going to one.
- From workers in Dubai, we learned there is a hunger to learn the bible, the Christian Holy Book.
- International workers are in search of community because they are so far from home.
- **Andrew** – Dubai Team wrote: Dubai is compelling because it is so unique. The nations have gathered there for work and leisure, and almost everyone speaks English. If they come to know Jesus in Dubai, they can reach their own people groups back home! Positives for going to Dubai: “No second language necessary”... “if you’re called to the _____ people group, they’re probably in Dubai”
- **Beth** – Dubai Team wrote: The compelling conviction to launch a mission in Dubai/UAE is pretty simple. Dubai is the one county in the world that hosts citizens of cultures and nations from all over the world. Out of the 3+ million people in Dubai a very small percentage (20%) are Emirati or natural born citizens of Dubai. The rest of the population is made up of workers, predominately from Third World countries. This segment of the population brings with them several world religions. These workers fill mostly the blue collar, hands on dirty jobs that the Emirati are beyond doing. The poorest of the poor flock to UAE to make little money to send home for their families. This environment allows the workers to be lonely, desiring family and lack of spiritual presence. A targeted mission would build upon this need and provide a loving, accepting, and Christian opportunity to experience the peace and refuge of knowing Jesus Christ.
- **Doyle**: Dubai team wrote: The UAE, and in particular Dubai, is a wide-open mission field at this point, with a transient population made up of people from almost all other countries in the world. About all of these people will ultimately leave the UAE and either return to their home country or move elsewhere. Thus, those who respond to the gospel in the UAE may help expand the Kingdom wherever they move in the future, including to countries where it is difficult to

establish an outside Christian ministry. We do not know how long the UAE government will allow an open evangelical presence in their country, so now is a wonderful time to expand mission work there.

- **Jacelyn:** Dubai team wrote: A compelling picture could be that of people from 120-130 nations worshipping together at Fellowship Creekside Church-Dubai and being trained to disciple and train others in their own countries upon return. [*“reach-train-send”*]

3. Strategy : What informal ideas make the most sense at this time for how this mission field will be launched and developed? How does this impact entry strategy?

- Language training is NOT needed in this field. Unless there is an affinity towards one language group.
- One possibility - multiple missionaries with different focuses. Envisioning people going to reach a particular ethnic group in Dubai under the umbrella of our overall training center ministry, led by one person or a couple with admin ability. At least in the longer term.
- Determine the partnering organization
- Establish communication between the partnering workers and those being sent. This will occur via electronic and in-person venues.
 - i. Multi-Culture training
 - ii. Team building through prayer and conversation
- Clear job description with long term flexibility
- VARIABLE: if the one being sent will have a professional job or church worker job, this will have implications on how this process unfolds.
 - i. Professional pursuits would require job searches ... applications ...
 - ii. Church worker – requires application process as well but starts with connections already started.

4. Visa: What are the visa requirements and what are our best options? What, if anything, does this mean for strategy or preparation?

- Work Visa
- Freelance visa – for more information go to <https://focus.hidubai.com/freelance-visa-dubai-guide/>
- University option – Gulf Theological Seminary of Dubai. Appears to be a conservative, reformed seminary associated with the Redeemer Church of Dubai. For more information: <https://www.gulfseminary.com>
- Tourist visa - the worker would have to live with other people. And leave the country every 90 days to renew the tourist visa.

5. Skill Sets: What are the skill sets that stand out as we look for missionary candidates for this field? How might people in your church hear the opportunity and call, including those who never imagined themselves as “missionaries.” How might the call for workers help people discover that their life or work experiences, character and

interests fit into the missionary team/s? Young adults? Mid-career? Retired? Long term? One to two years of service?

- Someone that is adaptable to learning different cultures and languages.
- It should be someone who is respectful of cultural differences
- Thinking outside of the box to reach others in a controlled environment
- Respectful of the local laws and policies
- Evangelism; relationship building with locals;
- Familiar with 3D Gospel.
- A great networker
- Flexible and open to new learning experiences
- Self sufficient
- Knowledge of Biblical application, history, and general knowledge
- Called to two worlds – professional pursuit and mission directed (tent-maker).

6. Language Learning: First term missionary's objectives will focus on language and culture learning through immersion. What relationships and connections might be available for language helpers for language learning through immersion? Are there formal language school options that should be considered? How much will these options cost? How does this impact what city or neighborhood they start?

- NOT needed in Dubai

7. Location: Where will our missionaries live? What is the region, specific city, or neighborhood?

- In Dubai but away from the city center
- Not sure which neighborhood - Location, while doing some searching, a good area to begin may be the Sharjah area. There is a cheaper cost of living and may be more accommodating to Christianity.
- There are lots of places to rent

8. Lifestyle: What will the missionary lifestyle look like for their first term of culture and language learning immersion? Will they have a car or use public transportation? Will they live on their own or with someone else?

- No language learning
- Culture learning from existing ministries
- If single individual, they would use public transportation for the first six months to a year. This would help to experience more of the culture and meet more people.
- If single, probably live with another person. This would make it life in Dubai affordable.
- If the ministry focus is upon assisting small churches among the workers, public transportation might not make it accessible.

9. Spiritual Issues: What are the significant spiritual issues in the area? How does this impact missionary self-care and support in this particular environment (i.e. coping strategies)?

- The ultimate god – gold
- The dominant religion of the region is Islam.
- The tolerance level of other religion varies in each Emirate. Dubai appears to be more tolerant than the other six.
- We were told that there are no atheists in Dubai. Everyone believes in something.
- Many are open to hearing about what the Bible teaches.
- Certain long-distant relatives (will explain the wording at the meeting) that can't discuss Christian Bible.
- We heard there are people coming to faith in Jesus.

10. Missionary Care: What needs considered for missionary care in the first term of language learning and culture bonding. What support is required? What pace and rhythms should be considered in this immersion context? Where will the missionary/s go for respite? Are there needs for on-site short- or long-term missionary support personnel? What support or camaraderie already exists in the area of service? What options are there for children's education (if applicable)?

- Loneliness may be a common issue. The heat, especially in the summer, keeps most people inside. One mom mentioned this in regards to her son.
- With a bit of personal effort a missionary will be able to engage in fellowship in a church (house, hotel, ...)
- Children's education is expensive and child-care is difficult to find.

11. Teams: It is natural to ask "what if" we have one missionary household ready to deploy but we don't have others identified or ready. There are many ways to define teams and each context/scenario will impact the way EFM would have "peace of mind" short or long term in the process of launching and building/developing healthy thriving teams and mission strategy long term. Please identify what missionary or expat personnel outside of EFM are working (or planning to work) in the area of this new field location who could serve as interim or long term "team" support to EFM worker/s. Briefly explain current status of relationship with these persons.

- Fellowship Church:
 - i. Pastor Aaron and Tessa – met in their home. Insightful. Welcoming. Passion to see work expand by receiving new workers.
 - ii. Jamie – She has been an ongoing
 - iii. Pastor Ray – met one time ... brief conversation
- House of Prayer – Grant
- Indonesian Church – Pastor Yen-Ti
- Nepali church - Roman

12. Support Budget: What will the major field expenses be during the first term?

Housing? Language helper and/or language classes? Transportation? Any insights concerning income levels and lifestyle in the area of service? What else?

- In Dubai the average expenses for a single person per month is \$1025.00 plus rent. Rent on average is comparable to the US, but the apartments are much different.
- In the Sharjah region, the average monthly expense is \$762.00 plus rent.
- The average income per year in Dubai for an Emirati is \$52,000.00.
- An American with some type of degree that can find employment with a larger company may be able to make more money.
- Americans usually have to be specialized to get work in the UAE because they require higher salaries than other countries.

13. Possible Missionaries: Who are possible missionary candidates for this field that we should be talking with and preparing? This includes people who don't have traditional "call" but are willing and able to serve within EFM's missionary qualifications and within context of type of service.

- Ian Davison - 23 years old, served as summer ministry intern at Orange Friends Church where his parents attend. Ian has expressed a sense of calling to the mission field, and was a member of our prayer team. While we were in Dubai, he said he felt like he was being led there specifically.
We will need to continue the conversation with Ian as he feels a strong affinity for churches that are more reformed and complementarian than ours. This could lead to challenges as Ian feels more led to partner with churches in the UAE that might not as readily partner with EFM.
We should continue the conversation with him and join him in prayer for his next steps.

14. Partnerships and relationships with other organizations, or collaborations with other regions/yearly meetings in the U.S.

15. What are other insights, questions, concerns, points which need to be noted and remembered?

- It seems there is a huge opportunity among the immigrant workers, but the difficulty is how to spend time with them because they work so much. How can we engage that population?
- Because the population is so diverse, is it best to target a specific people group, or just an area within the city?
- My ideal candidate – single, professional or university student or retired, teachable, ready to engage individuals from various nations with how to establish disciple making communities (is this what the early Quakers did?)
- A close second candidate – a ministry student graduate who will function as an intern at Fellowship Church.

- Where in search of 2 units to serve in Dubai. Should one unit be a couple? Should both units be couples? Same questions for singles.
- Making disciples of all nations can happen in one place!

Additional Notes

The original plan for our trip to Dubai in October was to be a “prayer focus”. The “pre-launch” component was added. The prayer team would meet in Dubai from October 09-15. There were four individuals who would stay in Dubai from October 16-19 to do the work of the pre-launch. Prior to the team leaving for Dubai the pre-launch team with down to two individuals. A decision was made to postpone the pre-launch team. Yet, much pre-launch material was gathered.

Next Step Proposal: To plan a pre-launch trip in the Spring of 2025.

- To sharpen the focus of the mission
- To bring a couple potential workers to taste and see the field
- To complete this document