SURVEY RESULTS

Purpose: The purpose of this survey was to obtain a better understanding of how Czech churches perceive the service of foreign missionaries in order to improve the long-term effectiveness of partnerships between Czech churches and foreign missionaries.

Methods: A Google Forms survey was sent via SalesForce to 533 email addresses identified with leadership in more evangelical Czech churches. 48 responses were obtained representing 48 different churches.

Implications: Foreign missions make a significant contribution to the work of Czech evangelical churches. While the response rate may appear low, at least 48 churches from various locations in the Czech Republic have had some kind of partnership experience with foreign missionaries, including 107 long-term partnerships averaging just over 4 years each, as well as ongoing partnerships with short-term teams. There are plenty of opportunities to improve the effectiveness of these partnerships.

• Czech churches will improve the effectiveness of missions partnerships by clarifying their own needs and expectations in the partnership in order to clearly identify why they desire a missionary partnership.
• Czech churches can improve the effectiveness of missions partnerships by clarifying the roles, goals, and expectations of the missionaries as well.
• Czech churches and missions agencies can work on clarifying their relationships with each other.
• Cultural differences between Czechs and foreign missionaries are a significant challenge. Czech churches can improve the effectiveness of missions partnerships by identifying and addressing these differences with their missionary partners.
• A natural challenge in long and short term missions partnerships is the language barrier. Despite this barrier, effective partnerships are formed and this is not generally perceived by respondents as a high-priority issue. How can Czech churches and foreign missionaries continue to work together to lower this barrier?
• Czech churches can learn from each other by sharing good and bad experiences. A manual of best practices could help facilitate this communication.

This research was conducted by the Czech Evangelical Alliance.
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RESULTS: GENERAL INFORMATION

**Denomination:**
- Církev bratrská 16 (33.3%)
- Apoštolská Církev 9 (18.8%)
- Bratrská jednota baptistů 8 (16.7%)
- Slezská církev evangelická augsburského vyznání 6 (12.5%)
- Církev Křesťanská společenství 3 (6.3%)
- Nezávislý sbor 3 (6.3%)
- Jiná 2 (4.2%)
- Evangelická církev metodistická 1 (2.1%)

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**About how long has your church existed? (48 responses)**

- 1 - 5 let: 83.3%
- 6-10 let: 12.5%
- 10 + let: 4.2%

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**About how many people regularly attend your worship services? (48 responses)**

- Nemáme bohoslužby: 33.3%
- 5 - 25: 16.7%
- 25-50: 12.5%
- 50-75: 10.4%
- 75-100: 27.1%
How many people does your church employ (paid employment)?

- 2 churches do not employ anyone
- 1 church has 1.3 time employed, 1 has 1 part-time, and 1 has 3 part-time employed.
- 22 churches employ 1 full-time person.
- 2 churches employ 1 full-time person plus another part-time person.
- 9 churches employ 2 full-time people.
- 4 churches employ 3 full-time people.
- 1 church each employs 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 full-time people.

PSČ (Zip Code) of your church. Responses came from all over the Czech Republic, not just Prague.
In the last 10 years, has your church formed any intentional partnerships with specific foreign/cross-cultural missionaries?

(48 responses)

- Yes – passive member: 9 (18.8%)
- Yes – active member: 25 (52.1%)
- Yes – intentional partnership: 18 (37.5%)
- Yes – paid employee: 5 (10.4%)
- No, never: 9 (18.8%)

Over the last 10 years, how often has your church hosted cross-cultural short-term missions teams?

(48 responses)

- Have not hosted foreign teams: 39.6% (19)
- Only once in the past: 22.9% (11)
- Sometimes: 18.8% (9)
- About once a year: 10.4% (5)
- 2-3 Teams a year: 8.3% (4)
- 4-5 Teams a years: 10.4% (5)
- More than 5 teams a year: 8.3% (4)
- Never again!: 39.6% (19)
RESULTS: EXPERIENCES WITH SPECIFIC MISSIONARY PARTNERS

In the last 10 years, how many foreign missionaries has your church either formed a specific, intentional partnership with, or employed as staff?

(32 responses)

For each missionary your church has worked with over the last 10 years, whether in the form of cooperation agreements or paid-time, please indicate their nationality, the number of years they served, and their ability to speak Czech on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest, fluent Czech being 5).

88 American Missionaries served an average of 4.22 years with an average Czech language ability of 2.78. The longest term was 20 years (language 5), the shortest 4 months (language 0).

9 German Missionaries served an average of 1.88 years with an average Czech language ability of 0.44, mitigated by 7 out of the 9 able to speak Slovak.

3 English Missionaries served an average of 3 years with a language ability of 1.

2 Canadian Missionaries served an average of 9.5 years (1 served 18 years, the other served 1) with an average language ability of 4.

2 Australian Missionaries served an average of 1 year with an average language ability of 2.

1 Swiss Missionary served 3 months with a language ability of 1.

1 Swedish Missionary served 20 years with a language ability of 1.

1 Korean Missionary served 5 years with a language ability of 1.

107 Foreign Missionaries in total, serving 32 Czech churches an average of just over 4 years each, generally attaining a Czech language ability of 1.5.

Denominations Bratřská jednota baptistů and Církev bratřská have the longest-serving missionaries. In general, with exceptions (good and bad), the longer a missionary serves, the better their language rating.
What were the main areas in which missionaries were involved in your church, serving in either an intentional partnership or as paid staff?

(36 responses)

- Children’s ministry: 11 (30.5%)
- Worship: 16 (44.4%)
- Evangelism: 17 (47.2%)
- Discipleship: 23 (63.9%)
- Church Planting: 13 (36.1%)
- Counseling: 4 (11.1%)
- Prayer Ministry: 11 (30.6%)
- Other: 3 (8.3%)

What was the source of the foreign missionary your church partnered with?

(37 responses)

- Partnership with a specific church: 15 (40.5%)
- Missions agency of a specific denomination: 12 (32.4%)
- Independent source: 8 (21.6%)
- Czech missions agency/organization: 7 (18.9%)
- Non-denominational foreign missions agency: 6 (16.2%)
- We partnered with missionaries from different sources: 5 (13.5%)
- Other: 4 (10.8%)

[Bar charts for both questions showing the distribution of responses]
**What was / is the greatest benefit of your cooperation with the missionary?**
Due to the variety of short-answer responses, the following categories were developed and ‘scored’ for a numerical value based on frequency of mention across all 48 respondents.

- Evangelism and Mission Activities: 16
- Encouragement: 10
- Enhance a specific ministry: 9
- Innovation in ministry/Different perspectives: 7
- Church Planting: 5
- Pastoral Care/Teaching: 5
- Prayer: 2

**What was / is your biggest challenge working with a missionary?**
Due to the variety of short-answer responses, the following categories were developed and ‘scored’ for a numerical value based on frequency of mention across all 48 respondents.

- Cultural Differences: 14
- Language Barrier: 9
- Patterns of Cooperation: 5
- Theological Differences: 2
- Specific Personal Issue: 1
- Financial: 1
RESULTS: EXPERIENCES WITH SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAMS

What was the source of the short-term foreign missions team you partnered with?

- Partnership with a specific church: 18 (42.9%)
- Missions agency of a specific denomination: 10 (23.8%)
- Czech missions agency/organization: 11 (26.2%)
- Non-denominational missions agency: 7 (16.7%)
- Independent source: 6 (14.3%)
- We worked with teams from a variety of sources: 4 (9.5%)
- Other: 3 (7.1%)

What were the specific areas of cooperation with the visiting team(s)? What did they come to help you with?

- English Camp: 11 (25.5%)
- Children’s Camp: 8 (18.6%)
- Physical (construction / maintenance / repair): 6 (14.2%)
- The team used our space for their own project: 1 (2.3%)
- Language courses: 3 (7%)
- Discipleship / Theological Education: 8 (18.6%)
- Evangelism: 23 (53.5%)
- I never did figure that out!: 1 (2.3%)
- Developing leaders: 3 (7%)
- Other: 5 (11.6%)

(43 responses)
What was the biggest benefit of your cooperation with a short-term team?
Due to the variety of short-answer responses, the following categories were developed and ‘scored’ for a numerical value based on frequency of mention across all 48 respondents.

- Evangelism and Evangelistic Activities: 21
  - Encouragement: 15
  - Atmosphere/Environment: 5
  - Partnership Connections: 4
  - Practical Help with activities: 3
  - New Perspectives: 1

What was the biggest challenge of your cooperation with a short-term team?
Due to the variety of short-answer responses, the following categories were developed and ‘scored’ for a numerical value based on frequency of mention across all 48 respondents.

- Practical Cooperation*: 12
- Cultural Differences: 8
- Patterns of Cooperation: 3
- Maturity/Moral Issues: 3
- Language Barrier: 2
- Reliability: 1
- Theological Differences: 1

*Indicating the logistical challenges of organizing the projects and partnerships, not an inability of the team and church to work with each other.
RESULTS: ACTION POINTS TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVE COOPERATION FOR MINISTRY

Better language preparation (able to communicate in Czech)

Better cultural preparation for serving in the Czech context.

A clear commitment to missionary service under the authority of a local church.

Churches should be able to clearly communicate why they are interested in a missionary and why they desire help.
Best practices manual for congregations with a focus on how to support missionaries.

Trial period for potential missionaries in the local church before entering an agreement of long-term cooperation.

Training for churches to be ready to receive and use the help of missionaries.
Action Point Priorities (in order of priority)

1. Churches should be able to clearly communicate why they are interested in a missionary and why they desire help.
2. Clearly defined relationships between local churches and missionary agencies.
3. Better clarification of mutual needs and expectations of the local church and missionary.
4. A clear commitment to missionary service under the authority of a local church.
5. Trial period for potential missionaries in the local church before entering an agreement of long-term cooperation.
6. Written cooperation agreement between the local church, mission agencies and missionaries.
8. Best practices manual for congregations with a focus on how to support missionaries.
9. Training for churches to be ready to receive and use the help of missionaries.
10. Better language skills (ability to communicate in Czech).
Do you have any other suggestions that could help improve cooperation between Czech and foreign missionaries? (A selection of answers, translated)

- Functional agencies.
- Clarify what the missionary wants to do, question why they want to be a missionary and that working hours in the Czech Republic are at least eight hours a day for workers in the Church.
- Clarify expectations.
- Language courses for incoming missionaries - intensively for at least two months!
- We do not know whether it is possible to apply for a missionary?
- If a missionary comes to serve the church, the missionary’s efforts should primarily be directed to building up the local communities and not the organization that facilitated their arrival.
- Prepare tools and recommendations for learning Czech; designate a contact person in the local church to communicate with the missionary and with the mission agency; before the conclusion of the agreement communicate the basic beliefs about the philosophy of service.
- Clarify the purpose of cooperation. Missionaries should help the Czech team. They should accept the authority of local church leadership.
- Who is actually the spiritual authority for missionaries? Their home church, sending agency, or the elders of the local church they are serving? To some extent they are responsible to all of these, and that's pretty difficult. Related to this is funding and accountability. I have no solutions, but rather realize the complexity of it all. Perhaps a broader discussion on this subject would be helpful for all.
- Acquaint churches with what mission agencies are offering in the form of personal promotion (missionaries and/or agency representatives visit local churches).
- Most of the missionaries goes to the biggest cities, but in small towns there is much more need because there are fewer servants.
- Mutual communication, regularly pray together.
- Strategies without any actual relationships are not very effective.