Ethnographic Research Manual

Introduction

Welcome to the training manual designed for national representatives of the Joshua Project. Whether you are new to ethnographic research or seeking a refresher, this guide will help you develop the necessary skills to collect reliable, meaningful data while engaging cross-culturally. As representatives, you may be working in culturally sensitive contexts, often in Muslim, Tribal, Buddhist, or Hindu-majority areas, so special emphasis is placed on both practical methodology and cultural sensitivity.

This manual provides essential guidance on understanding a community's worldview, social structure, and daily life, enabling you to be effective in field research while ensuring your safety. We aim to balance practical advice, theological principles, and strategic tools for your work on the mission field.

Section 1: Introduction to Ethnographic Research

1.1 Foundational Beliefs and Objectives

- **Biblical Foundation:**
    - "God gathers followers from all peoples" (Revelation 7:9), emphasizing the inclusivity of God's kingdom and His desire for all nations to worship Him.
    - Numbers 13:1-20 underscores the value of exploring the land and understanding its people, a practice echoed in modern missions.
- **Ethnographic research** supports the fulfillment of the Great Commission by equipping missionaries to understand cultural dynamics and effectively communicate the gospel.
    - The mission researcher's job is not complete until the information gathered is packaged in a way that can mobilize prayer and mission efforts.

Key Objectives:

- Identify and define the cultural dynamics and unique characteristics of people groups.
- Discover the most effective methods to communicate the gospel within specific cultural frameworks.
- Empower churches and missionaries to strategically reach the unreached with sustainable methods.

1.2 Why Ethnographic Research?

Ethnographic research is a critical tool for missions as it provides:

- A deeper and more accurate understanding of cultural practices, values, and worldviews, reducing the risk of miscommunication or cultural insensitivity.
- Practical insights that enable contextualized gospel communication tailored to the specific needs and preferences of each group.
- Data-driven strategies for church planting and mobilization that are sustainable and locally rooted.
- A framework for identifying gaps in outreach and prioritizing efforts where they are needed most.

1.3 How ethnographic Research supports the mission's endeavor.

Research plays a critical role in advancing global mission efforts by providing a framework for identifying needs, designing effective strategies, and measuring impact. As the gospel is shared across diverse cultures, research ensures that outreach is both relevant and respectful of local customs.

Key contributions of research include:

- **Contextual Understanding:** Research helps missionaries understand the unique cultural, religious, and social dynamics within a community, ensuring that the gospel message is communicated in a way that resonates with local values.
- **Identifying Strategic Entry Points:** By analyzing community structures, leadership, and networks, research highlights potential entry points for ministry and identifies individuals or groups likely to influence others.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Ongoing research allows teams to assess the effectiveness of mission efforts and adjust strategies accordingly. This helps avoid stagnation and ensures continuous improvement.
- **Avoiding Cultural Pitfalls:** Misunderstanding cultural practices can lead to rejection or resistance. Research minimizes this risk by highlighting potential areas of conflict or miscommunication.
- **Partnership Development:** Research helps identify local partners who can provide insight, support, and sustainability for long-term mission efforts.

Section 2: Understanding People Groups

2.1 The History of Unreached People Groups

The concept of "unreached people groups" gained significant momentum in the 1970s due to the work of Dr. Ralph Winter, a missiologist who introduced the term "hidden peoples" during the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974. His presentation highlighted the importance of identifying groups of people who had no indigenous church capable of reaching their own community. Winter's work led to a shift in missions strategy, emphasizing the need to target these distinct groups that often remain isolated due to cultural, linguistic, or geographical barriers.

Over time, the term "hidden peoples" evolved into what is now commonly referred to as "unreached people groups" (UPGs). These groups are defined as populations with little to no access to the gospel message within their cultural context.

Explore Further: [Read 'Defining Unreached: A Short History' By Dave Datema](#)

2.2 Identifying People Groups Based on Self-Identification

At Joshua Project, we strive to define people groups not as outsiders imposing labels but by recognizing how the group itself identifies. Factors such as language, clan affiliations, shared customs, and collective history play a crucial role in this identification process. However, identifying a people group is an ongoing journey, as we truly do not know the full extent of a group's boundaries until the gospel begins to spread. Only through observing where barriers of acceptance or understanding emerge can we fully understand what constitutes a distinct people group.

One of the simplest ways to identify barriers between people groups is by examining marriage practices within the community. If members of a tribe strictly marry within their own tribe, it often indicates that the tribe functions as a distinct people group. In such cases, the gospel may face challenges in being accepted by neighboring tribes. On the other hand, if multiple tribes freely intermarry, they may collectively form a single people group. While this method isn't perfect, it provides a helpful starting point for understanding social relationships and predicting how the gospel may either spread smoothly or encounter resistance.

Joshua Project's strategy in South Asia emphasizes defining people groups by community and caste rather than language, reflecting how people in the region identify themselves.

While language remains important, it is not the primary factor in self-identity for most South Asians. Instead, traditional community groupings, such as caste, have historically shaped mass movements to Christianity. Past efforts to base church planting on common language instead of community have often led to failure or limited success, as communities that do not naturally associate resist sharing religious spaces. Therefore, a community-centered approach is crucial for fostering effective church-planting movements in South Asia.

Explore Further:

- [Why Use Caste to Define Peoples](#)
- [People Group Strategy for the Evangelization of South Asia](#) by S.D. Ponraj
- [Are People Groups the Same as Language Groups?](#)

2.3 People Group Definitions

A "people group" is defined as the largest group within which the gospel can spread without encountering significant barriers of understanding or acceptance (1982 Lausanne Committee).

A people group list with a church planting focus:

Joshua Project's first purpose is to support church planting and discipleship efforts, and we define "people group" with that goal in mind. We also wish to support language-based ministry efforts (such as literature / video / audio distributions and the like), as a more secondary purpose. Our data can be used for both purposes. We can format the data to support church planting, and to some extent we can re-format it to support language-based outreach.

Linguistic:

In most parts of the world lack of understandability acts as the main barrier and it is appropriate to define people group primarily by language, with the possibility of sub-divisions based on dialect or cultural variations. Such a list may be referred to as an ethno-linguistic list of peoples.

Caste, Religion, Location:

In other parts of the world, most notably in portions of South Asia, acceptance is a greater barrier than understandability. In these regions, caste, religious tradition, location, and

common histories and legends may be used to identify the primary boundary of each people group. Language can be a secondary boundary.

What a people group is not:

While people groups can be defined by various combinations of ethnicity, language, religion, caste and geography, they are not defined by occupation, social status, education level, economic status or political affiliation. While these do not define people groups, these distinctions are helpful for on-the-ground strategies.

A people group is not the same as a group of people. Unreached is not the same as unsaved. "Unreached" in unreached people group is describing the group, not the individual members of it. So an "unreached people group" is not the same thing as a "group of unsaved people", despite the similarity of terms.

Explore Further: [Focus: The Power of People Group Thinking by John Robb](#)

Section 3: Ethnographic Research Methods

3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is one of the most powerful methods available to researchers seeking to understand a community's culture, values, and social dynamics. By immersing yourself in the daily lives of the people you are studying, you move beyond surface-level observation and gain invaluable firsthand experience. This method demands that you engage with both your surroundings and the people within them—listening, observing, and participating in everyday activities while keeping a detailed record of your insights. It is not simply about being present but about seeing with intention, focusing broadly to capture the environment as a whole, and documenting observations objectively. When done properly, participant observation builds trust and fosters relationships while providing the critical foundation for deeper inquiry and analysis.

Objective: Gain deep cultural understanding by immersing yourself in the everyday life and practices of the group you are studying.

A participant observer is unique in three significant ways;

1. **They participate and observe.** You keep your eyes open to learn as much as you can about the group you are studying.
2. **Eyes wide open.** Take in the whole environment. Many times, when there is sensory overload, you will screen out periphery happenings. Work to focus broadly.
3. **Preserve what you see.** Record what you see as soon as possible. Don't initially begin to make judgments of what you have experienced but thoroughly record your observations. You will at a later time weigh your observations, interviews, and other research to try to capture a full understanding.

Practical Steps:

- Attend community events such as religious ceremonies, festivals, or public gatherings.
- Observe cultural norms, interactions, and hierarchies without imposing personal biases.
- Take detailed notes discreetly, paying attention to non-verbal communication and group dynamics.

Benefits:

- Provides firsthand insight into the group's values and social structures.
- Builds trust and rapport within the community.

3.2 Cultural Helpers

Finding cultural helpers is a necessary prerequisite to asking questions. And asking questions is the means used to unravel the mysteries of who they are and how we can understand, befriend, and serve them. Selecting good cultural helpers is a matter of knowing what to look for and where to look for it.

Who Are They?

- Local insiders who possess deep knowledge of their culture and are actively engaged in it.

How to Identify Them:

- Frequent community hubs like marketplaces, religious centers, or cafes.
- Look for individuals who are approachable and willing to share their experiences.
- If there is a language barrier, go to places where you will likely find someone who speaks a language you can speak.
- Leverage networking through friends and contacts.
- Avoid people who are on the fringe of society.
- Take care not to interview people with anti-government or extremist sentiments. Your association with them could bring undue attention to you.

How to Engage Them:

- Approach with humility, expressing genuine curiosity and respect for their culture.
- Be needy. Many people want to help strangers.
- Use your situation for ways to connect. I.E. being in a new place, asking about something that is happening, or asking the significance of a religious location.

3.3 Conducting the Ethnographic Interview

Conducting effective ethnographic interviews involves more than simply asking questions; it requires creating an environment of trust and conversation flow. Below are key techniques to ensure success in gathering valuable insights:

1. **Push and Relax:** Alternate between deep discussions and casual topics to maintain comfort.
2. **Ride and Guide:** Let conversations flow naturally but redirect when needed.
3. **Pursue Themes:** Follow up on important responses with deeper questions.

Interview Tips:

- Begin with non-threatening topics such as family, food, or daily routines to build rapport.
- Avoid leading or overly broad questions that may confuse or intimidate the interviewee.
- Be attentive to body language and tone, which may provide additional context.

Section 4: Developing the Research Questions

4.1 General Framework

Use the basic structure of **Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How** to design your questions.

4.2 Customizing Questions for Context

- **Adapt questions** based on cultural norms, gender roles, and religious beliefs.
- **Avoid sensitive topics initially**; build trust before exploring deeper subjects.

4.3 Types of Ethnographic Interview Questions

Building effective research questions requires a mix of descriptive, exploratory, and comparative approaches to uncover cultural insights:

- **Grand Tour Questions:** Provide an overview.
    - Example: "Can you describe a typical day in your community?"

- **Mini Tour Questions:** Dive deeper into specific events or settings.
  - Example: "What happens during a wedding ceremony here?"
- **Experience Questions:** Focus on personal experiences.
  - Example: "What was your first experience attending a community festival?"
- **Native Language Questions:** Clarify local terms and expressions.
  - Example: "What does the term 'barakah' mean in your community?"
- **Structural Questions:** Explore cultural organization.
  - Example: "Who teaches the younger generation about traditions?"
- **Contrast Questions:** Highlight differences within the group.
  - Example: "How do younger members differ from the older generation in following traditions?"
- **Rationale Questions:** Understand the reasons behind practices.
  - Example: "Why is this festival the most important of the year?"

4.4 Core Ethnographic Questions to give quick insight

1. **Who holds influence within this community, and how do they shape decisions or cultural practices?**
   a. *(Purpose: Identify key leaders or groups to engage for effective outreach.)*
2. **What role does religion or spiritual belief play in daily life, family interactions, and community events?**
   a. *(Purpose: Understand the religious context and potential barriers or bridges to gospel communication.)*
3. **How do families and extended kinship networks function, and what are the primary responsibilities of each member?**
   a. *(Purpose: Explore family dynamics to tailor discipleship approaches.)*
4. **What traditions or life events (e.g., weddings, festivals, rites of passage) are most significant in the community, and how are they observed?**
   a. *(Purpose: Identify cultural entry points for relationship-building and ministry.)*
5. **What are the community's deepest hopes and fears, and how do they address challenges such as illness, death, or social conflict?**
   a. *(Purpose: Recognize underlying spiritual needs and points for introducing the gospel as a source of hope.)*

Explore Further: [Appendix A: Sample Questions](#)

Section 5: Gathering Demographic Information

Understanding the demographic context of the people group is essential for effective ethnographic research and mission planning. Gathering accurate demographic data enables teams to assess population size, religious distribution, and key metrics that inform outreach strategies.

Key Demographic Metrics to Collect:

- **Population Size:** Understanding the total number of people within the group and any significant population clusters.
- **Primary Location(s):** Knowing the primary location of a people group will be helpful in developing maps and mobilizing workers to specific regions or villages.
- **Religious Composition:** Collect data on the percentage of Christians, evangelicals, and adherents of other religions.
- **Urban vs. Rural Distribution:** Note where people live and how geographic differences might impact mission strategies.

These metrics will often provide the foundation for determining where and how to engage the group effectively. For a detailed guide on how to collect and analyze demographic data, see our Demographic Research Manual.

Explore Further: Demographic Research Manual

Section 6: Practical Tools for Data Collection

6.1 Tools for Observation and Note-taking

- **Field Notebook:** Essential for documenting observations, quotes, and key insights.
- **Digital Tools:** Apps like Evernote, OneNote or Otter.ai can organize notes and record audio (with permission).
- **Photography and Video:** Use cautiously and with consent to capture cultural elements.

6.2 Recording What You Have Learned

Recording and organizing the information you gather is critical to the success of ethnographic research. Without proper note-taking, valuable details can be lost or

forgotten. Below are key methods to ensure you capture and retain the richness of your experiences.

1. Fieldnotes: Take brief notes during or immediately after conversations or observations. Use a small, portable notebook to jot down reminders of key topics, quotes, or events. If taking notes during the interaction seems inappropriate, step aside afterward to record them.

Tips for Fieldnotes:

- Explain to your cultural helper why you are taking notes, ensuring transparency and trust.
- Be cautious about the security of your notes, especially if they contain sensitive information.
- Record details of conversations, cultural events, and interactions with national believers or local Christian workers.

2. The 24-Hour Rule: Expand your fieldnotes within 24 hours of the interaction to preserve important details. Delaying this process could result in forgetting key insights. Use expanded notes to capture everything you recall from the day.

3. Expanded Notes: Expanded notes allow you to flesh out brief fieldnotes and provide more context. Here are the sections you should include:

- **Topics We Discussed:** Broad topics such as family, religion, or occupation.
- **Stories I Heard:** Briefly recount any stories, legends, or anecdotes shared during the interaction.
- **New Terms or Facts I Learned:** Record unfamiliar cultural terms, concepts, or facts, and seek help with spelling and pronunciation if possible.
- **Words/Things I Didn't Understand:** Note any confusing terms or customs you observed.
- **New Questions I Have:** Document any questions that arise during or after the interaction, as these may guide future research or help you find answers later through other resources.

4. **Submitting updated information**
    - **Joshua Project Web Submissions** – Each Joshua Project profile page has a **"Submit Update"** button. This is best done for individual people groups. You can submit updated information directly through that button for:

- o Data/Statistical updates
- o People Group Photos
- o People Group Maps
- o People Group Profile Text
- **Online People Group Research Form** - This form is great to share with others and has questions for untrained researchers to provide sufficient information for updating people group data. (Link to Form)

(Joshua Project National and Regional Reps Only)

- **Updating statistical information by spreadsheet** – In Microsoft Teams, your supervisor will create an Excel spreadsheet with each people group in your assigned country(s). There are added columns highlighted in yellow for you to provide statistical updates.
- **Uploading notes and files directly to Teams –** In Microsoft Teams, you will have a personal Uploads folder where you can upload field notes, pictures, resources, etc. After uploading, communicate with your supervisor what you uploaded and what action needs to be taken with the information.

6.3 Mapping Tools

Mapping is a crucial aspect of ethnographic research for missions, as it allows researchers to visually organize and understand the spatial, social, and relational dynamics within a community. Effective mapping ensures that data is not only collected but also contextualized within the environment where interactions take place.

What to Map:

- **Community Hubs:** Identify key locations where people gather, such as marketplaces, religious centers, schools, community centers, and local events.
- **Residential Patterns:** Document different types of housing, neighborhoods, and settlement patterns to understand socio-economic divisions or enclaves.
- **Religious Centers:** Map churches, mosques, temples, or other places of worship and note their proximity to significant population segments.
- **Social Networks:** Visualize relationships between influential individuals, community leaders, and groups within the community.

- **Economic Zones:** Highlight areas of economic activity, such as bazaars, industrial zones, or artisan clusters, to understand the community's livelihood and economic dependence.
- **Transportation Routes:** Identify key roads, transit hubs, and informal paths to understand the movement of people and goods within and between communities.
- **Educational Institutions:** Map schools, training centers, and adult education facilities, as they can be points of influence and access to youth or emerging leaders.
- **Historical or Cultural Landmarks:** Mark locations of historical significance that influence community identity or hold symbolic meaning.

Why Mapping Matters:

- **Contextual Understanding:** Visual maps help identify areas where the gospel may be more effectively shared based on proximity to cultural or social hubs.
- **Strategic Planning:** Knowing where influential centers are located allows teams to prioritize engagement areas.
- **Gap Analysis:** Mapping can reveal underserved areas or communities lacking access to religious or social resources.
- **Tracking Progress:** Maps can be updated to reflect changes in demographics, infrastructure, spiritual engagement, or prayer coverage over time.

Mapping Tools:

- Google Maps
- Printed City or regional maps

Mapping should be dynamic and continuously updated as new information is gathered. Utilize both digital tools and physical maps to ensure flexibility in diverse environments. **Create visual representations** of community hubs, religious centers, and social networks to enhance understanding.

Section 7: Supplemental Materials in The Appendix

Access to well-organized supplemental materials is crucial for reinforcing the lessons learned in this training manual and supporting field research efforts. Below are key resources that national representatives can use for additional guidance:

A. **Sample Ethnographic Interview Questions**
    a. A collection of sample questions categorized by types such as Grand Tour, Mini Tour, and Native Language questions to assist in ethnographic interviews.
B. **Structured Field Note Templates**
    a. Templates designed for organizing observations, interviews, and key insights gathered during field research.
C. **Security Checklist for Field Researchers**
    a. A comprehensive checklist to ensure personal safety and data protection, especially when working in high-risk areas.
D. **Recommended Reading List**
    a. A curated list of books, articles, and academic papers focused on ethnographic research and missions.

Appendix A: Ethnographic Interview Questions for Training Manual

This appendix provides a comprehensive and robust list of ethnographic interview questions, organized by key themes and topics. These questions aim to help national representatives and researchers gather valuable insights into the demographics, culture, and life patterns of their focus people group.

1. General and Historical Context

- How did this people group arrive in this country or region?
- What were the main push/pull factors influencing their migration?
- What are the significant historical events among their people or in their country of origin?
- How do they view their history and its influence on their identity today?
- What are their subdivisions (tribes, clans, families)?
- What languages do they speak, and how do they differ by age, location, or status?

2. Core Values and Cultural Beliefs

- What are the core values of this group as evidenced by their choices, speech, and daily practices?
- What do they fear most? What do they value most (objects, ideals, goals)?
- What is their understanding of blessings, curses, taboos, charms, and natural laws?
- How do they perceive time—linear, cyclical, task-oriented, or event-oriented?
- How do they understand causality (fate, free will, supernatural intervention)?
- What are the most important social virtues and vices in their community?

3. Family Structure and Dynamics

- Who is considered the head of the household, and how is authority distributed?
- What are the typical roles of men, women, and children within the family?
- How are children raised, disciplined, and educated?

- How do family members handle conflicts and disagreements?
- What role do extended family members (grandparents, uncles, aunts) play?
- How are decisions made within the family?
- What are the key rites of passage, and how are they celebrated within families?

4. Social Organization

- What is the most important social unit: nuclear family, extended family, clan, or tribe?
- Who are the key community leaders, and how are they chosen?
- What institutions or bodies govern community decisions?
- How are disputes resolved within the community?
- What social rules govern interactions between genders, age groups, and classes?
- How do they perceive outsiders or people of other faiths?
- How does the community handle social deviation or transgression?

5. Economic Systems

- What are the common occupations or means of earning a living?
- What trades, crafts, or skills are most valued?
- How do they manage wealth, savings, and debt?
- What are typical household expenses and patterns of spending?
- How do they define and perceive poverty or prosperity?
- Are there any traditional methods of economic cooperation or exchange (barter, lending circles)?

6. Communication and Information Flow

- What are the preferred methods of communication (oral, written, digital)?
- What types of media (radio, TV, newspapers, social media) are most influential?
- What role do oral storytelling, proverbs, and songs play in communication?
- How do they perceive and trust various sources of news and information?
- How do they learn or transmit knowledge within the community (e.g., formal education, mentorship, or informal discussions)?

7. Religious Beliefs and Practices

- What is the predominant religious system or belief structure?
- What are their beliefs about God, spirits, ancestors, and the afterlife?
- How do they explain the concepts of sin, redemption, and morality?
- What role does religion play in family and community life?
- Who are the religious leaders, and how are they chosen?
- What rituals, festivals, or ceremonies are significant, and what meanings do they hold?

8. Socialization and Education

- What are the key methods used to educate children and young adults?
- What role does formal education play in their social mobility?
- What informal methods of education, such as apprenticeships or oral tradition, are used?
- How do they discipline and reward children or youth for positive or negative behavior?

9. Health and Well-being

- What do they consider a healthy life, and what practices maintain it?
- How do they perceive illness, and what are their preferred treatments (traditional remedies vs. modern medicine)?
- What role does spirituality play in health and healing?
- Who are the key individuals involved in healthcare delivery (healers, doctors, midwives)?

10. Rites of Passage and Life Events

- What are the key life events (birth, adulthood, marriage, death) that hold cultural significance?
- How are weddings, funerals, and coming-of-age ceremonies conducted?
- What are the roles of family, friends, and community in these ceremonies?

11. Gender and Age Roles

- How are roles defined based on gender?
- What is the role of elderly individuals in decision-making and cultural transmission?
- How does society view women's roles in family, community, and professional life?
- What opportunities and limitations do young men and women face?

12. Intergroup Relations and Conflict Resolution

- How do they perceive and interact with neighboring communities or tribes?
- What are the traditional methods of resolving disputes (mediation, village councils)?
- How do they address long-standing feuds or animosities?
- Are there common alliances or partnerships between groups?

13. Perceptions of Change and Modernization

- How do they perceive and adapt to external influences (globalization, technology)?
- What segments of society are more resistant to change, and which are more accepting?
- How is traditional knowledge preserved, and what innovations are welcomed?
- What is the role of youth in driving or resisting social change?

14. Key Questions for Understanding Gospel Engagement

- How do they perceive Christianity and Christians?
- What are their barriers to accepting the gospel (cultural, linguistic, historical)?
- What social or relational networks could be leveraged for sharing the gospel?
- What role do community leaders or elders play in religious decisions?

15. Practical Fieldwork Questions

- What daily activities and routines define their lives (e.g., work, family gatherings, religious observances)?
- Where do people gather, and how can this be utilized for engagement?
- What are effective ways of building trust and rapport within the community?

This appendix equips researchers to conduct in-depth interviews and gather qualitative data for a thorough understanding of the people group they are engaging with. These questions are to serve as a question bank, not a list to go through. Use wisdom in choosing questions, especially to fill in knowledge gaps.

Appendix B: Structured Field Note Template

1. Basic Information

- **Date of Observation:** _____
- **Time of Observation:** _____
- **Location:** _____
- **Observer(s):** _____

2. Contextual Details

- **Setting Description:** (Describe the environment, physical setting, and any relevant background information about the location.)

- **People Present:** (List the individuals or groups observed, including their roles or relationships to each other.)

3. Activities and Interactions

- **Main Activities:** (Describe the primary activities taking place and their significance.)

- **Notable Interactions:** (Record any key conversations, gestures, or actions observed between individuals or groups.)

4. Cultural Practices and Symbols

- **Observed Customs or Rituals:** (Document any traditions, rituals, or cultural practices witnessed.)

- **Symbols and Their Meanings:** (Note any significant symbols, artifacts, or attire and their interpretations.)

5. Language and Communication

- **Primary Language(s) Used:** _____

- **Non-verbal Communication:** (Describe gestures, facial expressions, or other forms of non-verbal communication.)

6. Key Observations

- **Significant Events or Actions:** (Highlight key moments that provide insights into the people group.)

- **Challenges or Issues Observed:** (Note any difficulties faced by individuals or groups.)

7. Reflections and Insights

- **Personal Reflections:** (Include the observer's thoughts, interpretations, or emotional responses to the observation.)

- **Potential Cultural or Social Implications:** (Consider how the observations might inform future interactions or research.)

8. Follow-up Questions or Actions

- **Questions for Further Investigation:**

- **Recommended Follow-up Actions:**

9. Additional Notes

- **Any Additional Observations or Details:**

Appendix C: Security Checklist for Researchers

1. Pre-Field Preparation

- **Research Area Assessment:**
    - o ___ Assess political stability in the research location.
    - o ___ Identify potential risks (e.g., civil unrest, crime, natural hazards).
    - o ___ Gather local regulations and cultural practices relevant to safety.
    - o ___ Connect with local contacts who can provide on-ground insights.
- **Health and Safety Measures:**
    - o ___ Ensure necessary vaccinations are completed.
    - o ___ Pack a well-stocked first-aid kit and necessary medications.
    - o ___ Obtain health insurance that includes evacuation coverage.
    - o ___ Identify local medical facilities.
- **Communication and Tracking:**
    - o ___ Set up a reliable means of communication (satellite phone, local SIM).
    - o ___ Share your itinerary with trusted contacts.
    - o ___ Establish check-in protocols with a designated safety contact.

2. Arrival and Orientation

- **Local Transportation:**
    - o ___ Verify safe and reliable transportation options.
    - o ___ Identify secure travel routes and alternatives.
- **Local Safety Briefing:**
    - o ___ Attend security briefings if available.
    - o ___ Review local emergency contact information.
- **Lodging Security:**
    - o ___ Ensure accommodation has secure locks and 24/7 security personnel if possible.
    - o ___ Verify proximity to police stations, hospitals, and consulates.

3. Fieldwork Safety Practices

- **Observation Site Safety:**
    - ___ Visit the site during daytime first to assess safety.
    - ___ Identify potential escape routes.
- **Blending In:**
    - ___ Dress according to local norms to avoid drawing attention.
    - ___ Learn basic local language phrases related to emergencies.
- **Equipment Security:**
    - ___ Keep minimal equipment visible.
    - ___ Back up data regularly and store it securely.

4. Interacting with Locals

- **Building Trust:**
    - ___ Build rapport gradually.
    - ___ Identify and rely on trustworthy cultural helpers.
- **Sensitive Topics:**
    - ___ Avoid discussing politically sensitive or controversial topics unless necessary.
    - ___ Respect local customs and taboos.

5. Digital and Data Security

- **Device Security:**
    - ___ Encrypt devices to protect sensitive data.
    - ___ Use strong passwords and two-factor authentication.
- **Internet Usage:**
    - ___ Avoid using public Wi-Fi for sensitive communications.
    - ___ Use a VPN when connecting online.
- **Data Backup:**
    - ___ Regularly back up field notes and recordings.
    - ___ Store backups in multiple secure locations (physical and cloud-based).

6. Emergency Procedures

- **Evacuation Plan:**
  - o ___ Have a detailed evacuation plan and route.
  - o ___ Identify safe meeting points.
- **Emergency Contacts:**
  - o ___ Maintain a list of emergency contacts (local and international).
  - o ___ Ensure family and organization contacts know emergency plans.
- **First Aid and Health Emergencies:**
  - o ___ Have access to first aid resources.
  - o ___ Know the nearest medical facilities and how to reach them.

7. Post-Fieldwork Review

- **Debriefing:**
  - o ___ Conduct a safety debrief upon return.
  - o ___ Evaluate effectiveness of security measures taken.
- **Data Handling:**
  - o ___ Review data for sensitive information before dissemination.
  - o ___ Ensure proper storage and sharing of confidential data.

This checklist is designed to ensure that researchers prioritize their safety and data security during fieldwork while respecting the cultural and legal norms of the research area.

Appendix D: Suggested Readings

This appendix provides a list of suggested readings and resources for those conducting ethnographic fieldwork and engaging in cross-cultural missions. These resources cover key topics such as cultural anthropology, missions strategies, and effective research methodologies.

Core Ethnographic and Cultural Studies

- **Spradley, James.** *The Ethnographic Interview*.
    - A foundational guide on conducting ethnographic interviews, using descriptive questions, and developing effective fieldwork strategies.
- **Hiebert, Paul G.** *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*.
    - Explores how understanding cultural anthropology enhances mission work and cultural adaptation.
- **Geertz, Clifford.** *The Interpretation of Cultures*.
    - Provides theoretical insights into understanding symbolic systems within cultures and how they relate to belief and practice.

Research Methods and Tools

- **Bernard, H. Russell.** *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.
    - Covers a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including participant observation and interviewing.
- **Exploring the Land (Caleb Project).**
    - A practical field manual used in missions research to help identify people groups, conduct surveys, and develop research-based ministry plans.