**A Team of 1**

by Justin Long

Many times I've been asked a question about our agency, [ActBeyond](http://justinlong.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c2bfc514437348a83f37050dd&id=3f69f0064c&e=0bfa5ee88d), "How big are the teams?" For us, the average size of a team is probably about 2 or 3 people. Rare is the team in one city that is much larger than that. The second question I am then asked is, "How is that a team? How is a husband and wife couple a 'team'?"

ActBeyond is not the only organization with 'teams' about this size. I know of at least one other very large organization where the local teams average about 4, and many of their teams are far smaller than that.

I've tried to communicate how this works before, but today a colleague of mine, Jim H., gave me a great illustration. "How can you be on a soccer team of 1? You can't be a team of 1." I laughed, as did he--but then he snuck the "clincher point" in. "But if I go into a poor community with a soccer ball, and I kick the ball out into the air over the field, before that ball hits the ground there'll be 20 people ready to play. Then it's just a matter of setting the goals. The team comes from the field."

This is exactly what I've tried to say, but this illustration caps it. There are places where a couple go and they labor, and they try to get in short-term workers to help, and they try to recruit long-termers as well, and fail. They try to reach the people--and fail, because they can't recruit enough workers from home to join them in the work.

There is another approach: a small team of Westerners builds a larger local team. One couple I interviewed during our recent Worldwide Conference went to a very unreached area. After a long effort, they found a "near culture insider" who was inspired and motivated by the idea of a movement. He began working, and they supported him by cross-pollinating best practices, tools, and thinking. As a result of the insider's work, more workers were raised up. Using movement thinking and reproducible processes, they were planting churches. After about 2 years, they were at nearly a thousand churches.

If we try to recruit a "soccer team" from the West to come and play in a spot, all we'll get is an audience.

But if we just bring the soccer ball, pretty soon we could have lots of local players--and maybe, pretty soon, those players will want to "compete" with us to make "team players" of the rest of the world. **The team is in the field.**