

Suggestions for welcoming new international students to your area

Preparation

- Pray for incoming students
- Find out what welcome provisions are already offered by institutions, CU's etc and when and where they are happening
- Identify main dates, points and times of arrival (e.g. buses/trains/planes). From this, decide when and where you are going to put your efforts. (Meeting new students at the airport or railway station, visiting university premises, e.g. Halls of Residence, getting a slot on the Orientation Course, a stall at the Freshers Fair). The attitude of the university 'authorities' is a major factor in determining which option is likely to be effective.
- Develop your own resources:
 - Manpower: recruit in April-June
 - Materials: e.g. banners, ID badges, local information
 - Facilities: a central place for coordinating and 'dropping in'
 - Choose your 'opening hours' and operating dates
- Where there are positive relationships, liaise with the university / college:
 - International office: details can be sent to incoming students (avoids duplication, promotes cooperation)
 - Administration: offer them a service and gain their trust; they need our help most at this period. Join in with "official welcome" if this is already running.
 - Accommodation office: for list of rentals and emergency accommodation, for procedures of checking into halls etc
 - Chaplaincy: it is good policy and perhaps they can support us
 - Where possible, encourage individual Christians to work for any university-run welcome scheme
- Liaise with CU's for volunteers and also as an important start to their year.
NB New international students may arrive two weeks before other freshers, because of orientation course(s). CU members need to be prepared to return early.
- Liaise with churches for volunteers, facilities, transport and finance.
- Have a pre-programme team meeting for prayer, allocation of duties etc. Decide whether it should be a 'Christian programme' or a broader based service.

Running the programme

Where meeting students at the airport/railway station:

- If possible, obtain a list of times of arrival of new students. Otherwise have a list of times of all relevant incoming transport e.g. flight arrival times of main flights from China which students are likely to be on.
- Have a set volunteer rota for people to sign up for shifts

- Have clear instructions for volunteers:
 - Be friendly, even if people don't want help
 - Hold banners / have visible ID so no ambiguity
 - Help students find transport to accommodation
 - Give them a 'welcome pack' of information
 - Take their details of nationality and course
 - Tell them about drop in centre
 - Encourage them to keep a particular lookout for new Christian international students e.g. many Africans, who may need help in finding a church etc. and who may be key contacts for the international student work in your area
- Put posters at arrival points with centre details for those coming out of hours

At your centre:

- Have someone at centre to deal with phone calls, coordinate personnel etc.
- Ensure supplies of materials and coffee / tea etc. and Christian literature
- Have info from other organisations, societies and churches in the centre
- Have a message board for students to leave word for others from their country
- Have a procedure for dealing with accommodation problems and other crises
- Recruit for the hospitality programme
- Organise tours of the town that people can sign up for
- Organise a welcome evening or trip away just before term or on first weekend
- Get a slot on the Orientation Course to tell int students about drop-in centre, Globe Café and other regular international student events, etc.

First term

- Have a joint event with the Christian Union publicised through door-to-door invitation; usually an evening of cultural introduction, ice breaking games and epilogue.
- Have a trip after a few weeks for which people can sign up at the above; have a Christmas/International food night with epilogue 2/3 weeks later.
- At all of these, advertise bible studies and the hospitality programme. The above also provide venues for making and building contacts with students for local Christians and CU members, so that they can meet early on. By Christmas you should have a pool of students with which to work for the rest of the year.
- Make use of e-mail as a way of keeping in touch with international students; have an e-mail circulation list that advertises the various events for international students. Have a form that they can fill in at the various events above which asks for this information.

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