



A.3 EXPEDITION PLANNING – AN INTRODUCTION

Peter Drake – Revised 2007

N.B. More detailed information on many of these topics is given in later sections of this webguide.

No matter what kind of venture you are planning the same rules of planning will apply, but obviously to a lesser or greater extent depending on the numbers involved, where you intend going, what you intend doing, and how long you intend being in the field.

The first thing you will have to decide is what kind of expedition or project you are hoping to organise. You will be faced with basically three choices:

1. You have a group of people who want to take part in the venture and the objectives must be fitted to their strengths and interests.
2. You have an objective or number of objectives you wish to achieve and you will need to recruit a team to achieve them.
3. You wish to have a multi-discipline or multi-interest party that will work in parallel in the field.

LEADERSHIP

Whether your expedition is a peer group one, or led by adults or a person with special experience, you will need to have someone who is formally identified and accepted as the leader. An expedition without a leader in the field is like a ship without a rudder at sea.

In similar vein deputy leaders and activity specialities should be formally identified and accepted.

On an expedition there is no place for a debate on each decision; at best it can waste a lot of time and at worst can be dangerous. Have all your debates and discussions about how the expedition is to be run and any rules people should follow before you leave the country. In the preparatory, in-field and windup phases the leader's decision should be final.

SELECTION OF THE PARTY

If you intend having some sort of selection process have very clear objectives of what you are looking for and make sure everybody who is taking part in the selection knows the ground rules. Selection must be fair.



PERSONAL PREPARATION

This will include obtaining the appropriate equipment, training in necessary skills (including survival, first aid, scientific and team building), getting the right injections and following an appropriate fitness training programme.

PLANNING

Your planning should start at least 18 months before the start of the expedition and a suggested outline plan is at the end of this chapter. It may be decided that a reconnaissance to the country you will be visiting should take place but this is not a holiday but a working visit. The cost of this visit may be put into the budget.

RESEARCHING YOUR PROJECT AND AREA

There are a number of organisations that can help you with your planning. Start by getting in touch with the Embassy or High Commission of the country you wish to visit.

The Young Explorers Trust also exists to help young people's expeditions going abroad. They also offer screening twice a year for expeditions who wish to apply for its Approval and Grant Aid. YET may be able to put you in touch with an expedition which has visited the part of the world you are hoping to visit.

You will also find buying one of the very good guide books such as a *Rough Guide* or *Lonely Planet*. Guides will be useful in giving you a lot of background information. A good map of the country will also be essential to your planning.



BUDGET

Once your plans have been made you will need to work out a realistic budget. Do not underestimate your budget and always have a contingency of at least 10% - 15% on the total amount. Fund raising takes time so don't over estimate the amount you can raise. The following are the headings you must consider.

- Administration
 - Postage
 - Telephone
 - Printing
 - Publicity
- Equipment
- Food
- Insurance
- Training
- Freight
- Air Transport
- Other transport
- Field Expenses
 - Living costs
 - Hire of local people
 - Vehicle Hire
 - Fuel
 - Local food
 - Gifts
 - Customs and port duty
- Post expedition expenses
 - Administration
 - Report
 - Photography
- Contingency

FOOD

At an early stage find out if any of your members require any special diets for medical or religious reasons.

Consider all the different stages of your expedition and work out what kind of rations you will require. Considerations include:

- Will you be in transit and not be able to cook?
- Do you need special mountain rations?
- How many days should each ration be for?

You will also need to find out what you can buy locally and what special foods you will need to bring with you. Make sure you can import the food you require into your host country.



EQUIPMENT

Like your food requirement, work through your equipment needs and decide what you must take with you and what you can obtain from the host country; but be careful for promises from host countries do not always come to fruition.

Also make sure the expedition team are appropriately trained in, and understand the use of, the equipment on the training weekends and remember to keep the equipment as simple as possible as you may have to repair it in the field.

TRANSPORT

As with other major items think out how many different kinds of transport you will require during the expedition. These may include air travel, transport to and from the airport, local hired transport, animal transport, etc. It is always worth getting two or three quotes for your travel requirements. When travelling by air see if the airline will give you extra weight allowance.

In parts of Africa (and elsewhere) the most dangerous part of the expedition is when you are travelling on the roads. Be very careful of local transport, for it will usually be grossly over crowded and your luggage may not be safe.

Also remember, if you hire local air or other transport, check to see if your insurance covers you, and that the vehicles are in acceptable condition.

INSURANCE

Make sure you are well insured and that the insurance covers all the activities you intend taking part in during the expedition, plus medical and evacuation insurance and third party cover.

COMMUNICATIONS

During the planning phase and in the field make sure everybody in the party is kept informed as much as possible. Also make sure legal guardians are fully briefed as to what the young members will be doing on the expedition.

HOME AGENT

This post is a very important one and should, if possible, be filled by someone who will be available in your home area throughout the whole time you are away. In the perfect world they should not be related to any member of the expedition so if some emergency does occur they can be detached and not emotionally involved.

They should have full details on all the members, their legal guardians etc. and who the insurance company is covering the expedition and what to do if an emergency arises.

All the articles which form the Webguide are all written by able and experienced leaders of youth expeditions, but represent their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Council of The Young Explorers' Trust. The points made represent suggestions for consideration rather than direct advice, and the responsibility for how these suggestions are used rests entirely with the users. No liability is accepted by the authors or by the Young Explorers' Trust for any loss or damage arising from the contents of these papers.



PLANNING SCHEDULE

Phase One (12 to 18 months ahead)

- Agree place, duties, projects and scope of expedition.
- Seek permission from countries to be visited.
- Make preliminary contact.
- Produce an outline budget.
- Produce information sheet on the area.
- Establish membership.
- Draw up preliminary food list.
- Open expedition account.
- Apply for sponsorship and or support.
- Start fundraising.

Phase Two (10 to 12 months ahead)

- Pay deposits.
- All members should pass any medical examinations required.
- Hold first expedition meeting.
- Finalise details of projects.
- Finalise dates of expedition.
- Agree dates of any training sessions.
- Meeting of expedition members.

Phase Three (8 to 10 months ahead)

- Continue collecting information on expedition area.
- Finalise equipment list.
- Draw up personal equipment list.
- Make up specialist teams of expedition members.
- Arrange insurance (medical, personal, third party indemnity etc.).
- Appoint home contact.
- Draw up outline menu and food requirements.
- Book any ferry crossings, air flights, rail tickets, camp sites or hotels.

Phase Four (4 months ahead)

- Start any vaccination programme required.
- Finalise food and menus.
- Start to receive stores and equipment.
- Finalise expedition programme.
- Meeting of members.

Phase Five (1 month ahead)

- Obtain any visas required.
- Obtain any tickets required.
- Pack all non-perishable food.
- Receive, check and pack all equipment.
- Check and make ready any vehicles you will be using.
- Send any freight ahead.
- Order money and travellers cheques from bank.

Phase Six (1 week ahead)

- Complete all vaccination requirements.
- Check all equipment and food lists.
- Check all passports and other travel documentation.
- Go through the complete plan with home contact.
- Collect money and travellers cheques.

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SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES

Edward Stanford Ltd. (Maps and Guide Books)

12/14 Long Acre
London WC2E 9LP

There are now many good book shops who have specialist travel dept. around the country.

The Young Explorers Trust
c/o The Royal Geographical Society
1 Kensington Gore
London SW7 2AR.

Gives grants, approval and advice to Young People's expedition going overseas

Central Bureau for Education Visits and Exchanges
Seymour Mews House
London W1H 9PE

Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council
7 Lion Yard,
Tremodoc Road,
Clapham
London SW4 7NQ.