

# GUIDANCE LEAFLET ON ADVOCACY TOURS:

**Building solidarity**

An Important  
Experience  
for  
Accompaniers



Guidance Leaflet on Advocacy Tours: *Building Solidarity*  
An Important Experience for Accompaniers  
35 pages  
165 x 225 mm  
Bogota, Colombia [PBI Colombia], 2020

First edition:  
March 2020

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[www.pbicolombia.org](http://www.pbicolombia.org)

This publication has been funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the support of Agencia Vasca de Cooperación al Desarrollo. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of PBI and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the funders.

Printed in Colombia



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## **STARTING AT THE BEGINNING ...**

Welcome to this learning experience and for your commitment to the defence of human rights.

For a few days you will be accompanying human rights defenders (HRDs) and helping to organise an advocacy tour in which they will engage in activities and participate in meetings designed to influence individuals and/or institutions capable of influencing the situations faced by HRDs and to monitor the results of any actions taken.

The tour also provides a concrete opportunity to express our solidarity with human rights organisations and HRDs. Furthermore, for many HRDs it provides an opportunity to escape their daily realities, to regain energy, describe what is happening in their places of origin, increase their levels of protection, and build alliances.



This leaflet has been written to deal with all these aspects of advocacy tours, considering the breadth of emotions that they will provoke both in the HRD and in you as the person accompanying them. Here, you will find a series of suggestions to help ensure the tour is a positive experience for individuals and for organisations alike.

We have produced a collection of cards outlining suggested activities HRDs might engage in during a tour. Some of these are included here too, as you will also find them useful. Adhering to the principle that I look after myself and we look after each other, remember that all of us are carers who also merit being cared for.

## THE PREPARATIONS BEGIN

The work begins for the people in the projects who are responsible for organising tours:

Now is the time to begin a conversation about the objectives of the tour and the activities it will entail, and to invite the HRDs to take part. The challenge of agreeing dates and themes and of ensuring fluid communication between the different PBI entities has begun.



At this stage, the objectives and scope of the tour are clarified, and agreement reached about which organisations should be invited to take part. It is the responsibility of the projects to maintain contact with the organisations and to suggest participants, according to the topics to be covered, male/female balance, etc.



On the basis of these inputs, the two organisations come to agreement and the person who will go on the tour is agreed.

Once it has been decided who will travel you should communicate directly with them!

This exchange is intended to provide an opportunity to explain the objectives of the tour, the hoped-for activities and to gauge the feelings and state of mind of the HRD.

Share the results of this meeting with the country groups and/or advocacy coordinators responsible for organising the tour. Send a brief biography and summary of the state of mind of the person who will be travelling, along with a photocopy of their passport.

From this point on, the project will help facilitate communication and relationship-building with the PBI staff responsible for organising the foreign part of the tour, and with the HRDs who will be taking part.

Encourage the HRD introduces themselves to the people who are going to receive them, in order to build up trust.



*Useful hint: Communication and availability: Identify one or more individuals who will be responsible for the tour – in terms of advocacy and psycho-social wellbeing, and/or the person who enjoys the closest relationship with the HRD.*



## PREPARATIONS FOR THE TOUR BEGIN IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE IT WILL TAKE PLACE.

The HRD will arrive in your country in a few weeks. Prepare properly, so that you are ready to receive them and accompany them during the advocacy tour. Remember that HRDs have their own visions, customs, cultures and knowledge, that are different from yours, but that are equally valuable.

It is therefore fundamental to:

1. Ensure you have prior understanding of the HRD you will be receiving and accompanying, and who will be playing an active advocacy role during the tour.
2. Clearly establish the practical aspects of their journey and stay.
3. Prepare their advocacy agenda in order to ensure advocacy targets understand and reflect on the complaints made by HRDs.
4. Prepare a list of expectations for the tour.

Afterwards, take the risk of discovering who it is you will be accompanying!



## 1) FINDING OUT WHO THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ACTUALLY IS

The person, or persons, who are about to arrive might belong to social organisations, or be leaders of agrarian, indigenous or afro-descendant communities. Remember that it might be their first ever speaker tour and that they will have high expectations of what might happen during their journey. They will no doubt feel nervous too. Make an effort to find out about them.

### ¿WHO ARE THEY?

We encourage you to read the introductory postcard sent by the HRD, or the biography provided by the PBI project.

Pay attention to biographical details: is the HRD male or female; what is their sexual preference; have they or their organisation received threats; have they have said they feel worn out or need some form of health care; is there is somewhere, or someone, they would like to visit..?

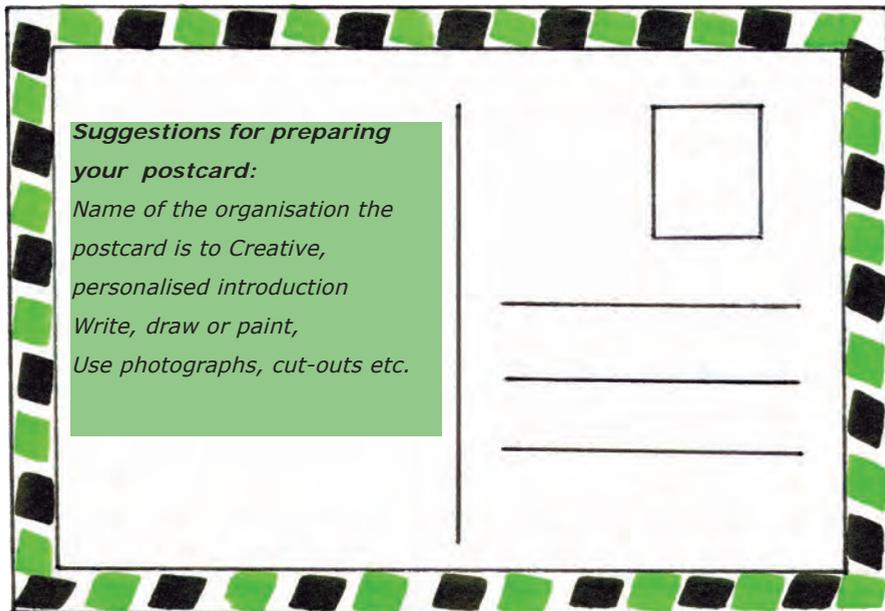


*Useful hint Focus on what is important for developing the advocacy agenda, bearing in mind health questions, expectations and needs.*

Following these initial contacts, you can continue communicating and demonstrate your availability in to clarify any lingering doubts.

## ¿WHO AM I? – INTRODUCTORY POSTCARD

It is now your turn to play an active part in establishing initial contact: share information with the HRD about who you are by writing a INTRODUCTORY POSTCARD



This will enable the people you will be accompanying to build up a picture of who you are and how you might be able to accompany them.

If several people from PBI are going to be accompanying the tour, you can include all the introductions in a single email or document. Agree on one contact person who will handle communications with the HRD.

You might also wish to provide more information on PBI or on the country groups with which they will have contact, such as videos, interviews, links to webpages, etc.

**REMEMBER!** This exercise has been suggested in order to strengthen contacts and generate confidence. You should always check whether it is a useful process, bearing in mind that a different person might end up taking part in the tour, or some other unexpected event may occur.

## 2) AGREEING PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

- ✓ Establish the dates of the tour and the countries to be included. Buy ticket(s) and medical insurance; prepare the letter of invitation.
- ✓ Agree on arrival plans: who will receive the HRD, organise accommodation, food and transport, who will provide accompaniment where, and when.

### THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU NEED TO BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL ABOUT:

- ✓ If the HRD going on the tour is a woman, take her views into account. Tell her if she will be accompanied by men, or if you are planning for her to stay in the house of a man, be they a PBI member or a volunteer. This is important, so you know whether this would be difficult for her and so you can take her response into account.
- ✓ Meals are common causes of awkwardness during tours. Try to avoid this by first ascertaining the HRD's tastes, their preparedness to try new foods, any dietary restrictions, etc.
- ✓ It is important to think about free time and rest and to give the HRD the opportunity to visit places of interest in the countries they are visiting.

### 3) PREPARING THE ADVOCACY AGENDA

When preparing the agenda, consult with those responsible for advocacy in the projects, bearing the following in mind:

#### BASIC STEPS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE AGENDA

1. Gain an in-depth understanding of the historical context of the conflicts experienced by the HRD in their territory.
2. Establish the theme of the advocacy tour, its objectives and activities.
3. Identify key actors and the extent of their interest in supporting the defence of human rights.
4. Determine activities, meetings and actions. Bear in mind that in general it is useful for social leaders to meet with similar people (e.g. union or teachers' leaders, etc.)

Try to find out the strengths of the HRD in order to be able to estimate the preparation time they will need (for public speaking engagements, meetings with authorities, press interviews, etc....)

5. As far as possible, define beforehand who will accompany the HRD on the tour.
6. Take into account any experiences the HRD might have had, or any specific health, family, personal, or other needs.



**REMEMBER!** it might be difficult to plan an agenda ahead of time. However, it is important to prepare drafts, with possible dates, meetings and personal contacts. It is important to provide updates to the organisation to which the HRD belongs concerning advances in planning the agenda. This will make it easier for them to prepare advocacy activities and to feel more confident in their ability to deal with changing circumstances.



*Useful hint: Try to ensure a balance between work activities, personal space and joint leisure activities.*

#### 4) LIST OF EXPECTATIONS

Spend time thinking about what you want to achieve with the tour. Prepare your own prioritised list of five expectations and then discuss them, and the expectations of other tour participants, in a virtual meeting organised for the purpose.



**EXPECTATIONS:**

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**NOTES:**

Once you have ordered your expectations please note down why each one is important:

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## ¡THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER HAS ARRIVED!

### 1) THE DAY HAS FINALLY ARRIVED: THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER HAS LANDED

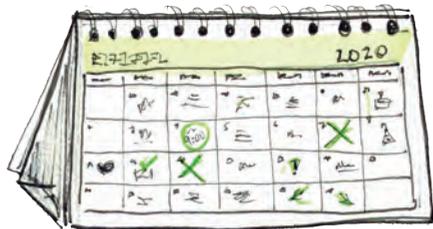
Leave for the airport in plenty of time to avoid traffic delays.

Below, a few recommendations for when you arrive at the airport:

- a. Locate the international arrivals gate.
- b. Check the Flight number and arrival time of the HRD.
- c. Wait for their arrival with a sign bearing their name (s)
- d. When they have arrived, ask the HRD how their journey was, and how they feel now they have arrived in your country.



*Useful Hint: It is important to foresee the possibility that some unexpected event might make it impossible to reach the airport. If you can, speak to the HRD by telephone. Make sure that they know the address of the agreed meeting point (hotel, house) and are able to get there independently if necessary.*



## 2) ON BOARD: THE ADVOCACY TOUR

The formal activities have now begun: meetings, conferences, workshops. You will be accompanying the HRD in each of these scenarios. Remember that if the tour is to be a success, it is important to work in a coordinated manner and to ensure good communication.



Have a look at the following tips:

1. Organise an initial meeting with the HRD in order to review the advocacy agenda (places, key players, interests and objectives), defining the agreements and commitments it is hoped will emerge from the tour.
2. If required, clarify the question of interpretation: who will interpret for the HRD; stress that they should use short phrases.
3. Prepare each point with the HRD in order to resolve any doubts: inviting them to express their own views on how they would like to present their points, or adaptations to the content.

4. Jointly with the HRD, prepare introductory postcards that provide information on the tour and which summarise the advocacy messages that have been agreed with their organisation.
5. Maintain permanent communication with the HRD, always being alert to their physical and emotional state, in recognition that they are far from home and that their advocacy responsibilities might lead to low mood, tiredness, or stress. Remember that you are their principal source of support.
6. When you leave a meeting, take a few moments to review how it went, speaking sincerely with the HRD and suggesting ways that, given their capabilities, they might be more effective in future meetings. Remember also to emphasise the things that went well.



### 3) TOOLS FOR EMOTIONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Leaving their home country to take part in an advocacy tour creates a sense of joy, motivation and commitment in HRDs. But it can also overwhelm them, provoke a sense of sadness, preoccupation and anguish. It is important to be aware that the HRD might be suffering from an accumulation of tiredness and stress.

Emotional support should be included in the agenda, ensuring the HRD receives sensitive treatment, affection and affirmation and that their immediate needs are met; this principle extends also to how you are feeling.

Small gestures, such as inviting the HRD out for a meal, offering to wash clothes, asking how they feel, practicing sport with them or going for a walk also makes up part of the tour. The personal is political.

Try to identify signs that might suggest that the HRD, or you, is not feeling good. Use the emotional thermometer, which has also been made available to the HRDs.



## INDICATORS

**RED:** I am feeling intense and frequent pain. A feeling of "not being capable" (of getting up in the morning, of speaking...), strong enough to prevent me from carrying out my usual activities. Paralysing fear or anxiety

**AMBER:** I am experiencing some new, more intense, pain, difficulties sleeping, irritability and negative emotions. I find it hard to be with other people. Recurrent negative and confused thoughts. Doubt, anxiety and fears that are beginning to affect my life

**GREEN:** I am enjoying things. My health, my sleep patterns and level of worry are within limits I recognise as normal for me.



## WHAT I AM EXPERIENCING

**RED:** I feel terrible physically and emotionally, most of the time. I don't know if I'll be able to carry on with the tour.

**AMBER:** I'm beginning to feel that something is going wrong and I'm worried. I am noticing different signs ["señales diferentes" es bastante vago] and I am not clear about what to do.

**GREEN:** I feel good, sure of my capabilities. I am experiencing the normal day-to-day concerns about my work and family, and a level of nerves appropriate to a speaker tour.

## An important experience for companions

If you feel that **you or the HRD are in the red**, it is time to DO SOMETHING, NOW!!

- ✓ Try to explain the situation clearly. This is not usually an easy thing to do! If it is particularly hard to speak about it, try to write it down.
- ✓ Contact a doctor or medical professional for help. Everybody needs help sometimes.
- ✓ Suspend the tour.



**NOTE** if you identify a situation that will be difficult to broach with the HRD, ask for help from someone else in PBI so that perhaps someone else could take on the accompaniment task.

If you feel that **you and/or the HRD are at amber** it is time to DO SOMETHING.

In the case of the HRD, try to identify the causes of their discomfort:

- ✦ How far away they are from their family, organisation and community.
- ✦ Experiences of racism and/or xenophobia in the places where the advocacy activities have been carried out.
- ✦ Exhaustion and stress caused by the demands of the tour.
- ✦ The appearance of physical ailments caused by diet or climate.
- ✦ Explore other causes...

*Share your concerns with other PBI bodies that know the HRD.*

You should also identify your own physical and emotional responses. Concern for the success of the tour, worry about whether you are providing adequate accompaniment to victims, listening to their stories: all of this will generate responses in you. Identify these impacts, and your needs, learn to express them and share them with your comrades. Take your time if necessary.



*Useful hint: Establish relations of trust and empathy with the HRD. Listen, ask about their (valid) opinions; ask them how they feel, how they are, what they need in order to feel better, what is important to them ...*



## ¡LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT!

### IT'S TIME TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Not everyone looks after themselves in the same way. There is no single formula that works in the same way for everybody.

Bear in mind the following everyday factors that help you control and deal with your emotions and prevent them from reaching the red zone of the thermometer.



- 👂 Maintain regular eating habits and sleeping rhythms.
- 👂 Recognise emotions, and talk about them with people you trust.
- 👂 Establish limits: don't overwork. You should be conscious of the commitments that have been entered into in the planning of the speaker tour
  - 🔊 Before taking on new responsibilities, think for a while about your real capacity
  - 🔊 Learn to say "I can't", or "that is not something I cannot do" without feeling guilty about it. Everybody has limits, and the important thing is to recognise and respect them.
  - 🔊 If the demands of the tour imply a major emotional investment (the tension associated with the desire to make it a success, sadness at the experiences of the individual, or tiredness because you have to accompany the HRD for a long time ...), speak about it within PBI, and seek out free time or rotate responsibilities.
- 👂 Identify silent spaces, as far as is possible, or opportunities to connect with nature or your support network, in order to recognise what you are experiencing and identify your needs.

👂 Separate your personal experiences from work matters: avoid the notorious “working lunch”, seeking out instead topics of conversation that are not work-related.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREE TIME: THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IS ALLOWED TO LEARN AND RELAX!**

The tour represents a major commitment, including a considerable intellectual and physical investment. For this reason it is important to ensure free time and rest, to allow the mind to disengage, and to review what has happened up to now.



It is important to consult with the HRD and to include downtime in the agenda.

It is helpful to ask the HRD if they would like to have some free time alone, without PBI accompaniment (as long as there are no language difficulties and it is safe to do so).

If the agenda includes spaces to be shared between PBI and the HRD, we make the following suggestions:

- ✦ Sharing a meal in the city they are staying in will help develop a more fraternal, empathetic, relationship and provide an opportunity to share life stories.

## An important experience for companions

- ✦ Organising a tour of the historical centre of the city will provide them with an opportunity to gain a closer understanding of your country's culture and to take photographs.
- ✦ Identify a place where souvenirs and artisanal products may be purchased so that the HRD can buy presents for their family, organisation or community.

### DEALING WITH DIFFICULTIES AND CONFLICTS:

Life is flux. This implies that even when an agenda or a timeline have been prepared even weeks or months in advance, unexpected events may occur, and any of the following situations might arise:

- 👂 Appointments or meetings have to be rescheduled, and you might learn of these changes even while you are on the way to the meeting.
- 👂 The meeting ends up with a different person from the one who was expected.
- 👂 The time allotted to the event is reduced or may be extended, taking up time that was earmarked for rest.
- 👂 Less time is available for eating and sleeping.
- 👂 Delays or changes to flights or public transport schedules.

*In cases such as these, you will have to deal with your own frustration while at the same time supporting the HRD...*

- 👂 Don't take expressions of irritation on the part of the HRD personally. It's the situation not you!
- 👂 Feel free to share your frustrations and unhappiness. You are both in this together!
- 👂 Try to focus on solutions and not on frustrations or complaints. It's time to forge ahead!

👂 If possible, treat the situation with humour. It will make a good anecdote about the tour!

## **SOMETIMES THE DIFFICULTIES ARE MORE PERSONAL...**

When you spend a lot of time with other people or live with them, disagreements may occur. This is normal, and happens in all human relations. Everyone is a universe unto themselves and our experiences and interpretations of events differ. This is even more the case when cultures are different.

If it is a matter of a minor disagreement, try to talk it through openly and resolve it as soon as possible. Don't waste any time!

If you think it is a matter of a series of disagreements or more serious difficulties in the relationship, it is important to take into account the patterns of communication that have developed with the HRD you are accompanying and the ways you both express your emotions.

Do your best to express yourself to the other person without blame; don't present yourself as a victim. Try using the procedure presented below, expressing your emotions openly. Being clear about our emotions but non-judgemental, opens the door to fluid communication and to a willingness to encounter a mutual solution.

## An important experience for companions

- ✓ When you do this, \_\_\_\_\_ I feel like \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ I have felt like this \_\_\_\_\_ as a result of this situation \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ The way in which you spoke to me when you said, \_\_\_\_\_ made me feel \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ Say what you need to say: I need: \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ When this situation is over, I would like to \_\_\_\_\_



*Useful hint: Dialogue. Express your opinion without assigning blame, or causing unnecessary conflicts.*

## PAY ATTENTION TO PROTECTION

During the tour, pay attention to any situation that might affect the security of the person you are accompanying, above all in public scenarios – perhaps involving public events, demonstrations, social media – in which security threats might occur (being followed, threats, accusations...).

If any of these things occur, NOTE THEM DOWN with as much detail as possible (place, date and time; what happened and how? Who was present and how many people were there?)

Speak about the incident with your PBI colleagues as soon as possible and agree any measures to be taken with the HRD.

## ¡SAYING FAREWEL!



To Every moment shared with the HRD during the speaker tour has been important. The time has come to thank them for the bonds that have been constructed, the learning process and the opportunities for dialogue.

We suggest you organise an opportunity to meet, in which you can share anecdotes, important moments, evaluations and gratitude for everything that has happened during the speaker tour, celebrating the opportunity to have met and worked together.

Two events might be organised – one more formal, to evaluate the tour, and the other more an act of celebration.

If possible, communicate with the HRD one or two weeks after the tour ends, when they are back in their country of origin, in order to demonstrate your interest in how things are going.

## EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP



*Useful hint: Create a record of what happened*

- ✓ Those who accompanied the tour (country groups/advocacy coordinators) should prepare an evaluation document that will be shared with the project.
- ✓ The project will seek a meeting with the HRD who participated in the tour in order to carry out a joint evaluation and agree on ways to monitor the commitments made during it.

## EVALUATION FORM

### 1. PREPARATION

- ✓ Agenda preparation, adequate information-sharing beforehand, contact and quality of relationship before the tour started.
- ✓ Tour preparation by both organisations.

### 2. THE RELATIONSHIPS BUILT AS A RESULT OF THE TOUR

- ✓ With peer organisations and allies
- ✓ Institutions

### **3. ADVOCACY MEETINGS**

- ✓ Topics raised
- ✓ Messages transmitted
- ✓ Rhythm and tone of the meetings.
- ✓ Commitments entered into



### **4. COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION**

- ✓ With the organisers of the tour
- ✓ Between the two organisations

5. ¿How did i feel? How did we feel?

6. ¿Were opportunities available for care to be offered?

7. What i have learnt about myself

8. Learning points for my organisation

9. Agreements and commitments that require monitoring. How?

10. Suggestions for future tours

# **ANNEX 1:**

**LIST OF  
THINGS**

**I  
MUSTN'T  
FORGET**



## CHECK LIST

### TWO MONTHS BEFORE

<input type="checkbox"/> Define objectives and themes of the tour	Project
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify the HRD who will be invited	Project
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate potential countries and activities with Country Groups (CGs)	Project and CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm validity of passport and national identity card	Project and CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of passport and biographical data (full name, date of birth, place of birth, telephone number, email...) have been sent to the host organisation	Project and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Buy plane tickets	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Buy medical insurance	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and send letter of invitation	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Check whether there are any other immigration requirements	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree final objectives and agenda with all projected activities (advocacy, rest periods and free time, self-care)	CG, Project and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

## ONE MONTH BEFORE

<input type="checkbox"/> List of contact details for all the people who will accompany the HRD	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm flight reservations and lodging	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree final objectives and agenda with all projected activities (advocacy, rest periods and free time, self-care)	CG, Project and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the HRD sends introductory information to the comrades who are going to accompany them	Project and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> All the companions send their introductory postcards	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation agreement signed by the organisation of the person who will travel	CG and Project
<input type="checkbox"/> Preparation with the HRD before they travel	Project
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the names of the individuals who will meet the HRD on arrival	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

## DURING

<input type="checkbox"/> Meet the HRD on arrival at the airport	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform the Project that the HRD has arrived safely	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Organise an initial meeting with the HRD to go over the advocacy agenda, confirming the agreements and the commitments it is hoped to achieve during the tour	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Plan each meeting with the HR, inviting them to describe how they would like to make their presentations and discussing possible changes to content, in order to resolve any doubts	CG and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain permanent communication with the HRD about their physical and emotional health. Remember that you will be their principal support	CG and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> When you leave the meeting, take a few moments to speak about it with the HRD	CG and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure the HRD has time available to call their organisation/family	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure the HRD has free time and opportunities to rest; check what the HRD wants.	CG and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared opportunity to evaluate the meetings, commitments and pending tasks together	CG and HRD
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate the departure and arrival with the next CG or with the HRD's organisation at the end of the tour	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

## AFTER

<input type="checkbox"/> CGs send a report to the project on the activities carried out, important information, commitments, pending tasks and feelings. Base this on agreed evaluation structure	CG
<input type="checkbox"/> The Project will seek a meeting with the person who participated on the tour in order to gather their impressions and feelings and to organise follow-up and fulfilment of commitments entered into	Project
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	



**pbi**



Document funded by:



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands

With the support of:



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