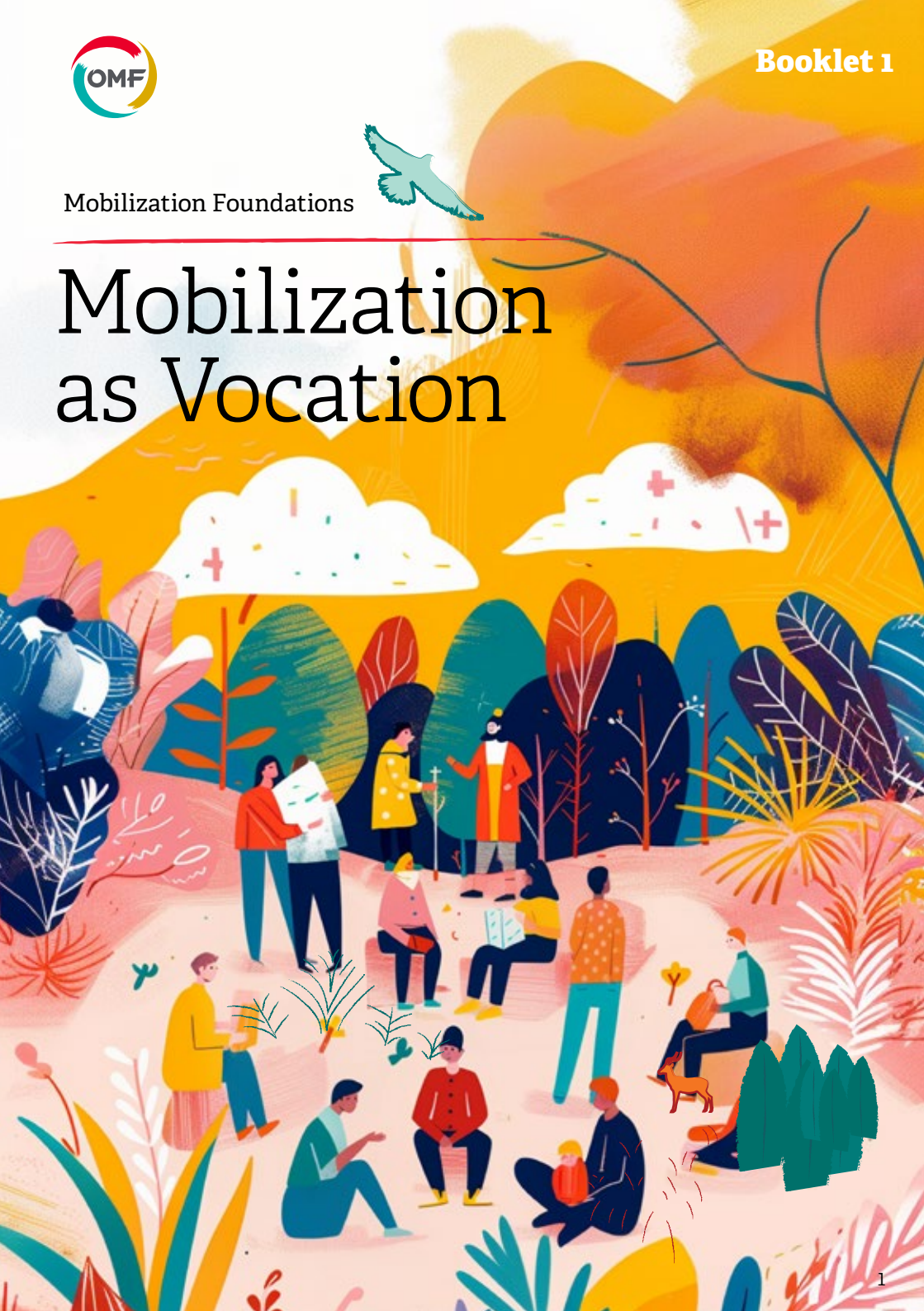


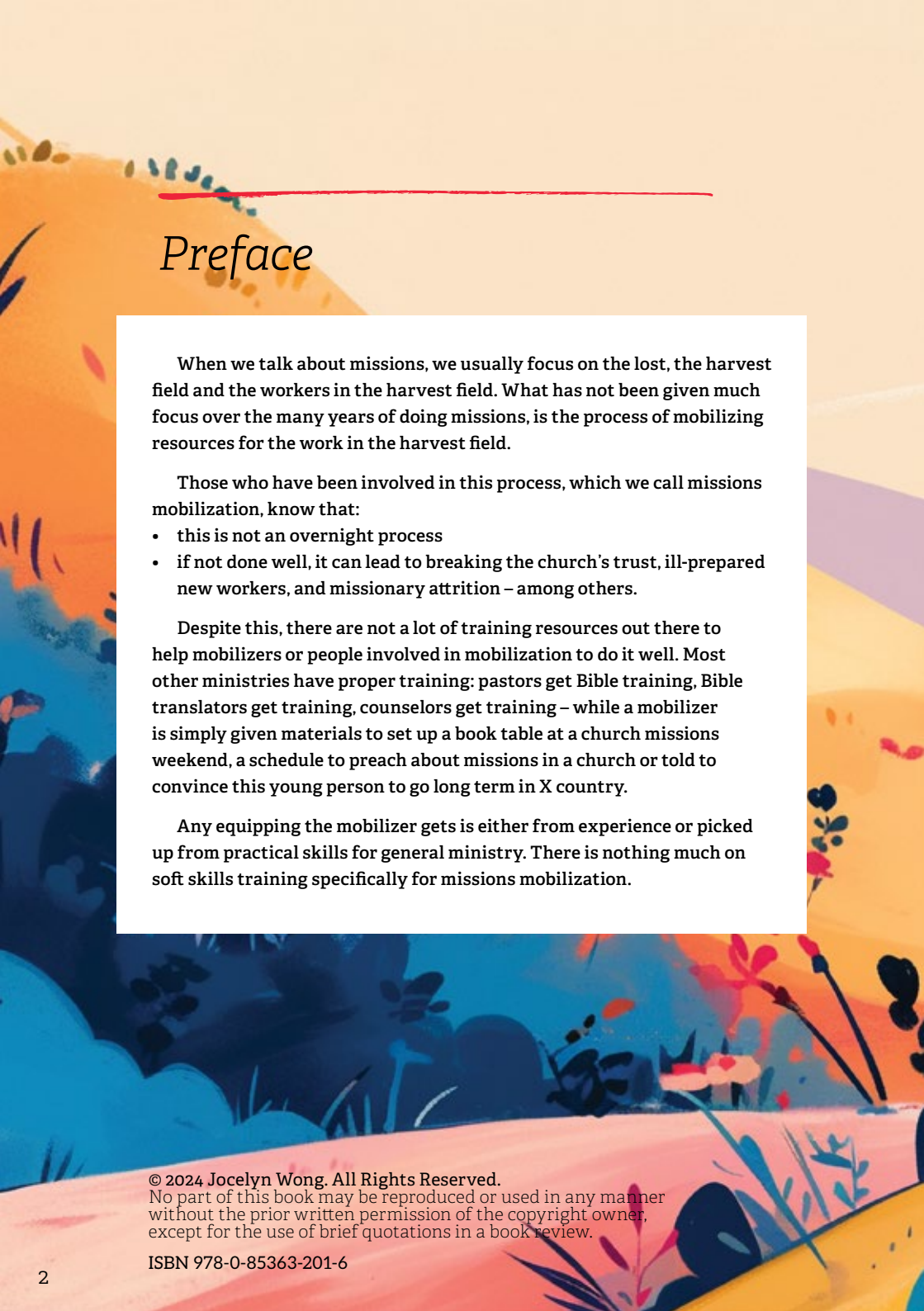


Mobilization Foundations



Mobilization as Vocation





Preface

When we talk about missions, we usually focus on the lost, the harvest field and the workers in the harvest field. What has not been given much focus over the many years of doing missions, is the process of mobilizing resources for the work in the harvest field.

Those who have been involved in this process, which we call missions mobilization, know that:

- this is not an overnight process
- if not done well, it can lead to breaking the church's trust, ill-prepared new workers, and missionary attrition – among others.

Despite this, there are not a lot of training resources out there to help mobilizers or people involved in mobilization to do it well. Most other ministries have proper training: pastors get Bible training, Bible translators get training, counselors get training – while a mobilizer is simply given materials to set up a book table at a church missions weekend, a schedule to preach about missions in a church or told to convince this young person to go long term in X country.

Any equipping the mobilizer gets is either from experience or picked up from practical skills for general ministry. There is nothing much on soft skills training specifically for missions mobilization.

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These series of booklets are:

- Booklet 1: Mobilization as a Vocation
- Booklet 2: Mobilization and Church History
- Booklet 3: Mobilization Focus
- Booklet 4: Mobilization Principles

These booklets are an attempt to provide some foundational thinking on mobilization for mobilizers or anyone interested/involved in mobilization. Hopefully, reading these booklets will prompt more in-depth reflections on the practice of mobilization. It is our hope that these reflections would result to mobilization done with more careful thought and God-honoring practices.

Although these booklets are written for mobilizers, we do hope that those who are in the work of missions will take time to also read and consider their own potential in mobilizing for the harvest field.

You can read these booklets on your own or as a team. There are reflection questions at the end of each booklet that can help in guiding discussions and further learning. And speaking of further learning, there is a list of books in the last booklet to get you started to read more about mobilization.

Through good, God-honoring mobilization practices, may we see more people and churches involved in the work of the harvest field. These series of booklets are based on the dissertation written by Jojie Wong entitled “Developing an Integrated Foundational Training of Missions Mobilizers for OMF Philippine Home Council.”

If you would like to request for the dissertation, email Jojie Wong at jojie.wong@gmail.com





Introduction

We speak often of a vocation, conviction, or calling to cross-cultural service. Every Christian has a role in God's global mission, with great potential to make a difference in our broken world. As people and churches respond to God's leading into greater involvement in global missions, the journey of learning, equipping and engagement begins. Mobilizers play a significant and vital role in the lives of Christians who are on that journey. Ours is a valid, worthy and important calling.

What is Mobilization?

Mobilization is about movement and change. It is a process of motivating and educating people and local churches towards meaningful and holistic engagement in cross-cultural mission. This engagement may or may not be in partnership with a mission agency.

The Importance of Mobilization

Mobilization is absolutely vital to the mission enterprise.

Many Christians are unaware that when we pray, "Your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven," (Matt. 6:10) we are acknowledging that mission is God's top priority. God so loved the world that He sent Jesus. And Jesus says that, as the Father sent Him, so He is sending us. (Jn. 20:21) Many are also unaware that loving our neighbor and making disciples includes those beyond our family, our comfort zone, and our immediate social circles. Sadly, there is still misunderstanding and confusion around what "mission" means. It is important to highlight biblical teaching and communicate a biblical picture of mission.

With a sound biblical understanding of mission, God can use us to create or grow awareness and get people started on their mission discipleship path.



The Call to Mobilize

Mobilization may be a relatively new term in the context of Christian mission's long history, but has actually been going on for centuries. There are many biblical examples of people being mobilized or needing to be mobilized. (e.g. Gen. 12:1-3, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 10, Romans 10:14-15). Historical examples will be discussed in Booklet 2.

What do we mean by “the call to mobilize”? We mean an inner conviction and desire to do the work of mobilization. This comes from realizing the need to be intentional about helping people see the world as God sees it – with love, mercy and compassion. This also stems from a desire to help people see that God has given each of us the privilege to join Him in what He is doing in this world.

This awareness or awakening is the first step. Next come the learning, equipping and engagement stages. As people move through each stage,

it is helpful to have committed, competent and caring mobilizers walk alongside them; mobilizers who are willing to listen, teach, encourage them, provide them with resources as well as connect them to other missions-minded individuals.

As mobilizers journey with people through the stages, they must do so with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's guidance and awareness of God's sovereign work in each person's life.

After all, the call to mobilize is a call to partner with God, the Lord of the Harvest and therefore, Master Mobilizer.

The Outcomes of Mobilization

So what mobilization outcomes are expected by our Master Mobilizer? Matthew 9:36-38 provides us with a helpful guide. When Jesus saw the overwhelming spiritual needs in the different places He went to, He exhorted His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Prayer and laborers are foundational outcomes of mobilization. In acknowledging the importance of prayer, we acknowledge the Lordship of Christ over the harvest field – yes, laborers are needed and ultimately, God does the sending! Acknowledging the Lordship of Christ also means that He decides the who, how and when of sending. They can be followers who are sent from overseas, followers within the same country or people group, and can be from anywhere – the places we expect them to come from, and the unexpected places. Their journey could take months or years! The Bible is full of stories that remind us we serve a God who does the unexpected. Thus, being attuned to God is crucial for mobilizers.

Missional disciples are also an important outcome for mobilizers – ensuring that they disciple those they are journeying with well; caring for their spiritual maturity in Christ as much as their journey towards engaging in the global work of God.

Finally, mobilizers aim for local churches to embrace their role in global missions. The local church plays a primary role in sending and sustaining cross-cultural workers, as can be seen in Paul and Barnabas' partnership with various churches (Phil. 4:10-20, 16; 2 Cor. 11:9). It is important that mobilizers remind the individuals they are journeying with to engage (or mobilize) their churches early in their journey to missions engagement.

The Role and Tasks of Mobilization

Mobilizers work towards the outcomes outlined in the following ways:

- creating or growing mission awareness among Christians in local churches
- discipling, coming alongside explorers and listening to their stories
- presenting different ways of missions involvement¹
- helping explorers discern God's call on their lives
- networking with colleagues in the mission community
- providing mission information and resources as needed
- connecting with and helping church leaders mobilize their churches

¹ The 6 Ways provides a diversity of concrete ways to be involved—even while they are in the journey.

As mobilizers interact with people exploring cross-cultural mission, they seek to:

- identify which needs and/or opportunities may be a suitable fit
- explain qualifications required for the role, such as training, professional experience, and ministry skills
- discern readiness in light of the qualifications required, such as life skills and experiences, any need for further training, and the preparations involved
- encourage and support, especially when they make difficult decisions
- be available to answer questions, especially as they count the cost
- guide them through the steps involved in getting “from here to there”
- help their church understand sending, and their own role in journeying with their church
- ensure good continuity of relationships, should they apply with a mission agency
- support them if they are led to serve with another agency

*As mobilizers,
we work for God's Kingdom,
not our own.*





Mobilization as a Team Effort

1 Corinthians 12 reminds us of how diversity is important in the life of the church. As a work within the body of Christ, mobilization cannot be a one-person job. Many different gifts are needed to mobilize, including:

- public speaking – preaching, teaching, training
- communications/media – developing mission resources
- event coordination – organizing prayer meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops
- mentoring – motivating and equipping those in transition

Of course, one mobilizer will not have all these gifts and skills. Each mobilizer needs to discern where exactly their gifts are best utilized. They can work with other mobilizers and also look for ways to develop additional skills to be better equipped.

An illustration in a soft, painterly style. In the foreground, a person with red hair tied in a bun, wearing a red shirt and dark pants with a blue backpack, stands on a yellow-orange hill. They are gesturing with their right hand towards the left. To their left, another person with red hair, wearing a yellow and orange striped shirt and dark pants, is crouching down. The background is a warm, hazy landscape with soft orange and yellow tones. The overall mood is hopeful and encouraging.

Mobilization as a Long Term Commitment

To mobilize effectively, commitment as well as a long-term perspective is needed.

Once mission awareness has grown from casual interest to concern and a desire to be involved – whether in individuals, families, or churches – mobilizers need to be available to follow up. Mobilizers are involved in encouraging, helping and guiding people forward until the path ahead becomes clear. While many mobilizers can contribute in different ways, it helps if there are a few who consistently journey with them over the long haul.



Mobilization as Lifelong Learning

Sadly, not all mobilization is good mobilization. When done hastily or without careful thought, mobilization may lead to broken trust, confusion, poor decisions or even early attrition.

In order to mobilize effectively, mobilizers need to be lifelong learners. There are many biblical, historical and contemporary examples we can reflect on and apply so that our mobilization practice will be sound, producing fruitful, long-term results. You can learn more about mobilization in Booklets 2 to 4 (a Reading List is included in Book 4).

Mobilization as Adapting to Context

There is no one size fits all for the mobilizer or the mobilized. There are differing contexts, diverse churches, and a constantly changing world. New mission opportunities are created, new generations of Christians grow up and church leaders explore new mission partnerships. Despite all this, there are some common principles and practices that do not change.

Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on your own journey towards taking on a mobilizer role. When did you first realize that God had led you to this? How did you come to that understanding? What experiences or lessons were part of that process?

2. As you reflect on and practice mobilization, what are some perceptions you had in the past about mobilization that are affirmed and what have been corrected?

3. What God-given experiences and skills do you now use in your role as mobilizer? What other skills could you develop?

4. Think about your current context. In light of the situation there, how can you grow into a more effective mobilizer? What resources might be helpful?



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