

FAQs about International Twinning

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Q1. What can our dollars do?

- A. \$25 can feed a family of six in Peru for a week.
- \$75 can build a shelter for a family in Guatemala.
- \$90 can care for an orphan in El Salvador for a month.
- \$120 can stock a Vincentian dispensary in Colombia for a month.

Q2. How do we know what use is being made of our contribution?

- A. The contributing Conference or Council corresponds directly with the Vincentians overseas, normally on a quarterly basis. For example, a thank-you letter from Quito, Ecuador will tell what was accomplished with the \$100 quarterly contribution received from a U.S. Conference:
 - Operation to correct birth deformity in young woman
 - Hospitalization for baby injured in fall
 - Lodging for abandoned mother and two children
 - Help for students from poor family
 - Aid to elderly invalid
 - Aid to two retarded boys
 - Help for education of orphaned girl
 - Help for unemployed head of household
 - Wheelchair for disabled person
 - Help for blind widow

Q3. What can I do as an individual?

- A. As a Vincentian, you can persuade your Conference or Council to participate in the International Twinning Program. Let your Conference or Council President know that you support Twinning with an overseas partner. Information can be obtained from the National Council Office.
- B. Individual Vincentians can also use personal funds to help another Conference – *New!*

Q4. How much assistance should a Conference or Council offer?

- A. Decide what country you would like to Twin with and how much you are able to share. National Office suggests a \$75 quarterly contribution for Conferences, but the amount is up to you. Because of the strength of the U.S. Dollar, even a small contribution can make a big difference.

Q5. Where can our Conference or Council Twin?

- A. Conferences and Councils in the United States are assigned Twinning partners by the United States National Office. We are currently focusing on the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and Mexico.

Q6. Should Conferences and Councils that wish to Twin contact overseas groups directly?

- A. *No!* Once you have decided that you want to Twin, and in what country, send your formal request for a Twinning partner to the National Council Office, which is kept apprised by the International Council General in Paris of the needs in other countries.

Never send Twinning contributions directly to Councils or Conferences in other countries. Unless the contribution passes through the National Council of the United States to the designated country, there is no assurance that it will ever reach your Twinning partner. Your Council/Conference will be duly credited and acknowledged. This method of fund transfer, as directed by the International Council General, prevents loss, reduces duplication of effort, aids in obtaining the best dollar exchange, and reduces the potential for laundering of illegal funds. It also provides receipts for and traceability of funds, thereby assuring accountability.

In some instances, funds are transferred electronically to a bank in the country of your Twinning partner and deposited directly into their SVDP account, thus protecting against interception or loss in the mails. As an example, Mexico imposes a \$5.00 fee for each check processed, regardless of the amount. To minimize the impact of this charge, the U.S. Council can consolidate funds from a number of partners and transmit them via a single check. One hundred percent of the contribution then goes to the partner, with no administrative fees deducted. Given the number of Twinning partners we have in Mexico, the savings are substantial.

Q7. What about regular correspondence with our Twinning partner?

- A. Once Twinning has started, the individual U.S. Conference or Council will correspond directly with their overseas Twinning partner. It is recommended that this be done at least every three months. If receipt of funds goes unacknowledged or there is no correspondence from either party for at least six months, the Twinning arrangement is suspended until the situation is corrected. The National Council's Office should be notified if you have a problem with communications or any questions on non-receipt of Twinning funds.

Q8. Are we limited to sending only money to the Twinning Conference or Council?

- A. No. Food, clothing, building materials, seeds, agricultural tools, medicine, and other items identified by the Twinning partner as necessary to enhance the quality of life for the poor they serve can be part of the Twinning exchange. However, you are responsible for direct shipment of these "goods," which should be reported to the National Office as part of our program. Personal visits are encouraged between Twinning partners. Prayers, especially at the Conference and Council meetings, are to be offered for them frequently, as they will be for you.

Q9. How do we contact the Conference or Council with whom we will establish a foreign Twin?

- A. The National Council of the United States will initially contact the National Council in the receiving country you have been assigned or have selected for Twinning. If you have requested a specific Twinning partner, the National Council in the Twinned country may possibly suggest a needier or more deserving Conference, Council, or project as your Twinning partner. You will be notified of their suggestion before we proceed.