

MARC ABOUT CTO MISSIONS

Conversation with Dr. Marc Levitt | CTO Founder & Pediatric Surgeon

[About a CTO mission]

[Marc Levitt, Pediatric Surgeon, CTO Founder, Washington D.C., USA]

The other challenge is getting the team, the CTO team, to the location in the developing world. And there's some fairly fixed costs: we need the travel expenses of the team members and when they arrive in the country, we need their accommodations. We need equipment, but much of that we have. Occasionally that needs to be replenished, but really, it's a matter of personnel and providing skill acquisition to the team. There's not a lot of equipment costs, it's just our experience passed through the eyes and hands of our team, to the eyes and the hands of the team at the local place. So really each CTO trip in its own unit is about \$25000 of funding to bring a team there and back. All of these people on the team volunteer their time. In fact, they feel like it's a very enjoyable time away from work, even though they are working very very hard. The days are very long. They're very gratified, the team bonding is amazing, and it's a very special time for them, but all we need is the expenses to get them there.

So, on a typical mission, we gather the team, people are flying from all over the world on this particular day. Usually, the next day we have a clinic and we see the patients that want our care. It's usually very busy, 30 to 50 patients in a clinic setting. All the patients usually come at the very beginning of the day and then we see them all, and there's always extras that we didn't know were coming. Until we're done, until the day is done, we don't rest. Usually, the next day we do some fun bonding experience for the team because the children that need surgery need a day for preparation, they need a bowel preparation. We can't operate on them the day after we see them, they need to come to the hospital, get their bowels cleaned out ready for surgery. So, let's say we have that clinic on a Saturday, on the Sunday we'll have a fun day for the team to bond, and then the OR [operating room] begins. And it's usually a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We start early in the morning with OR preparation, usually around 6:30-7:00 in the morning. OR is all day. Whenever we get done, we get done, and then we have a team dinner. And that's how it works. Usually over three days we can do somewhere between 15 and 25 operations depending on how many ORs the host can provide us. I like three rooms running at the same time, we can then get a lot of cases done.