

New Places for New People

Starting new Christian
communities:
A practical guide

Chapter 4

The District
New Places for
New People
Team

The District New Places for New People Team

The District New Places for New People (NPNP) Team (or teams) will have the following three functions and will be accountable to the District Synod/District Policy Committee for their work. Depending on context, a district may decide to form one team to fulfil all of these functions, or to divide the work between two or more teams, or to create working parties from one team for specific tasks – different models will work for different contexts. However, for ease of reference, we will refer to the 'District NPNP Team' throughout this resource.

The functions of the District NPNP Team are to:

1. initiate the district-led project(s) by discerning a context, vision and focus for the project, playing a role in submission for funding (see page 5), and leading on any necessary recruitment
2. create a culture of pioneering within the district that inspires every circuit to start an NPNP. In particular to:
 - a. act as advocates for the values of the Methodist Church in relation to pioneering and planting (see page 2 for more info), showing a preferential bias for Church at the Margins projects
 - b. encourage and equip circuits and local churches to launch NPNPs
 - c. shape, guide and champion the NPNP movement across the district
 - d. embed NPNP/CaM as a top priority in the district mission plan/strategy
 - e. model best practice in discernment, prayer and decision-making for pioneering teams to emulate.
3. oversee and manage the funding of circuit-led or local-church-led NPNPs.

District NPNP Team members

It is important to form this team out of prayer and conversations with people who may feel called to be a part of it. Some suggested members of the District NPNP Team are:

The District Chair: The Chair's role is both to support the contexts where projects are beginning and to enable the circuits and local churches to imagine what is possible in their communities, as the district places NPNP at the centre of its mission strategy.

District Mission Enabler (or equivalent): The Enabler's voice will be key to identifying the places where there is capacity to begin a fruitful project. Their expertise and connection to the District Missioners' Community is a rich resource. If the district does not have an Enabler, consider involving someone, lay or ordained, who is a recognised leader and is passionate about mission.

Learning Network Methodist Pioneering Pathways regional lead: The local Learning Network Officer brings knowledge of the pioneer community in the region. They can also advocate and share the district's NPNP vision with the pioneer community as it develops, and invite pioneers to integrate their work into that vision.

A Planter or Pioneer: This is someone with first-hand experience of beginning an NPNP. Their role will be to ensure the vision is grounded, practical, and realistic. Involving them in shaping the vision helps to avoid unnecessary pitfalls and builds in best practice early on. This is unlikely to be the same pioneer who will later lead the district-led NPNP.

Person with financial experience: This is someone with experience in budgeting, accounting and/or financial planning who is not afraid to talk about money as a gift. Their skills will be needed both in the short-term to begin a project and in the long-term strategic use of resources.

Key influencers and advocates: These are people with knowledge of district structures and the ability to navigate, influence, and work with those structures to support NPNPs. They are people who can advocate for the importance of NPNPs in the life and future of the Church.

A person who will model deep, trusting faith: This person needs to always remind the team, in the midst of shaping the vision, that it is God's work not ours, be that when it is easy or hard. They will remind everyone to keep praying in the busyness of planning, and to listen for the Holy Spirit's promptings.

An organiser: It is so easy to dream and imagine, but every team needs someone who will keep the project on track, collate information and establish the next steps.

Ways of working

Remember that the team can work in varied ways, beyond video calls or formal meeting-rooms. Think about where you could gather to inspire creativity, eg in coffee shops, on a walk, by prayer-walking the streets of potential projects, or by discussing ideas over a meal together.

Strategic planning

A crucial role of the District NPNP Team is to strategically oversee the visioning and funding process for circuits to begin an NPNP as part of every circuit's mission plan. The readiness to access funding will vary across circuits so the District NPNP Team will need to monitor not just the NPNP projects beginning but all the emerging opportunities. This will require the following:

- In consultation with the Superintendents and Circuit Leadership Teams, analyse the readiness of circuits to begin an NPNP. Invite them to decide the timescale of when they might begin the process.
- Support, encourage and enable the emerging vision for the NPNP circuit project. For example, vision days, prayer, training on how to begin, and their place in the circuit mission plan.
- Map a five-year strategic plan that details when circuits are likely to begin a project and share this with every Circuit Leadership Team.
- Set some realistic goals for the number of projects that will begin.



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- Keep a database of projects, their progress, readiness to plant again, and how they might encourage the NPNP movement across the district.
- Regularly communicate with circuits, reminding them of their place in the strategic plan and the requirements for accessing funding.

For more information on setting up funding processes for circuit-led NPNPs, see page 73.