



HOMESTAY GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE



Small Business
Competitiveness

ILO - ASEAN Small Business Competitiveness

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Introduction

Introduction

About C-BED

Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) is a low cost, innovative training programme designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support skills development and empowerment in local communities for improvements in livelihoods, productivity and working conditions.

As an approach to training, C-BED is unique in that the programme is built around peer-to-peer, activity based learning methods with no role for teachers, experts, or external consultants specialised in the skill area. Instead, C-BED participants work together through a series of activities and discussions guided only by simple step-by-step instructions in the training manual. New knowledge, skills and competencies are developed through the interactions between participants and sharing of existing local knowledge and experience. In this way the programme is a low cost, sustainable option for any organization or community.

The C-BED programme is structured around two core training packages designed to develop competencies for business start-up and operation through a focus on marketing, financial management, and action planning. These are the C-BED for Aspiring Entrepreneurs and C-BED for Small Business Operators. Additionally, a growing suite of tools to strengthen business competencies and enhance skills for specific sectors is in continual development. These packages can be implemented as either stand-alone trainings or integrated in modular format into existing programmes.

Homestays

Homestays allow tourists to stay in a home-like environment during their time in particular destination. This allows tourists to become better acquainted with the local environment or even to improve their local language skills. This offers an alternative to staying in a hotel, guesthouse or backpackers. Owning a homestay can be a rewarding experience both for the homestay owner and the tourist. It can help homestay owners earn some extra money, meet interesting people, and proudly share their traditions and culture with others. It can also enhance the tourists experience in the tourist destination.

The Homestay Package

The training:

The homestay package should be used to help aspiring and current homestay owners start and improve their businesses. It focuses on key business principles to build on from what participants already know from managing their business and helps them to learn more. It can also build on from the learning in other C-BED tools namely SBO or AE. Participants bring experience to share and leave with a priority action plan (at least 3 actions to introduce improvements to their business). At the end of the training participants will have:

Enhanced and advanced existing knowledge on homestay development

- Strengthened critical competences to analyse job prospects or current conditions of work
- Affirmed the potential of enterprise development
- Identified steps and actions to improve a business or launch a business idea
- Decided on actions for the future
- Started planning effective collaborations and associations

The Good Practice Guide (GPG):

This Good Practice Guide (GPG) is designed to help all homestay owners start and improve their businesses. Those who take part in the training day will be introduced to and become familiar with the GPG on the day. However, those who have not attended the training can also use the GPG. The GPG contains a number of practical tools, tips and exercises to help business or aspiring homestay owners.

How to Use the Good Practice Guide



Good practice tools



Exercise



Case studies



Definitions



Tips



Extra information for you to take note of

How to Start a Homestay

1. How to Start a Homestay

OBJECTIVES:

- Help you to get started
- Take into account the role of your family
- Find out what you have and what you need

TRAINING GUIDE:

- The importance of this section was highlighted in session 2 but it was not covered in-depth

1.1. Getting Started

If you start a homestay you will probably need a lot of help from your family. Ask yourself: is my family ready to help me with this kind of business?



1. Think about how prepared your family is to help you start a homestay.
2. Ask yourself these questions, and put an X in either the "Yes" or the "No" column.

Table 1.1.1: My Family

Yes No

Do all my family members support this idea?		
Does my family enjoy meeting strangers?		
Does my family value and appreciate other cultures?		
Is my family willing to give up some privacy?		
Will all my family members help with the homestay?		
Does anyone in my family speak another language?		
Does anyone in my family speak English?		
Is anyone in my family good with numbers?		
Does anyone in my family enjoy cooking?		
Is my family willing to keep a high level of cleanliness in our home?		
Is my family willing to maintain a high level of personal hygiene?		

What does this mean? If you answered, "Yes" to every question it will be easier for you to start a homestay. If you answered, "No" to some of the questions, it will be

more challenging for you to start a homestay.

Ask yourself: what do I need to do to prepare my home for a homestay? If you start a homestay, you will need:

1. At least one clean, comfortable guest bedroom
2. A clean, modern bathroom
3. A clean, comfortable dining area



Note

Some homestays have more than one guest bedroom, but you only need one to get started. Some homestays have a separate bathroom for guests only. That is not necessary, but if your guests share a bathroom with your family, it must be kept very clean at all times.



1. Ask yourself if you already have the items on these lists.
2. Put an X in either the "Yes" column or the "No" column.

Table 1.1.2: Amenities Checklist

Guestroom(s)	Yes	No	Guestroom(s)	Yes	No
One or two guest bedrooms			Ceiling or wall light		
Beds with mattresses			Reading lamps by bed(s)		
Pillows			Shelves		
Blankets			Hooks on walls for coats		
Sheets and pillowcases			Window curtains		
Mosquito nets			Floor rug by the door		
Small table			Wastebasket		
Chairs			Decorations (art, flowers)		
Electric plugs			Lock for the door		
Bathroom	Yes	No	Dining Area	Yes	No
Sit-down flush toilet			Table		
Shower with hot/cold water			Chairs and/or benches		
Sink			Tablecloth(s)		
Ceiling or wall light			Plates		
Guest towels			Bowls		
Floor mat by the shower			Cups		
Wall shelves and hooks			Glasses		
Mirror above the sink			Forks, knives, spoons		
Electric plug			Chopsticks		
Toilet paper			Salt and pepper shakers		
Soap			Bottled water		
Wastebasket			Hot water dispenser		

Toilet cleaning brush			Tea, sugar, cream		
Curtains for windows			Napkins (cloth or paper)		
Lock for the door			Decorations (art, flowers)		

What does this mean?

If you answered, “Yes” for most of these items, it will be easier for you to start a homestay. If you answered, “No” for most of these items, it will be more challenging for you to start a homestay.



Note

According to a survey taken in Bangkok in 2010 of international tourists who would like to stay in a homestay:

- 70% wanted a sit-down toilet
- 44% wanted a hot shower facility¹

Ask yourself: how will I get all the things I need to start a homestay? Section 4 will help you further with this question.

¹ From: “Tourists’ perceptions and expectations of an authentic home-stay experience in Thailand: Should attributes be modified for commercially viability?” Author: Peter Masters, International College, Khon Kaen University

Creating Systems

2. Creating Systems

OBJECTIVES:

- Helps you to know what systems you need
- Helps you to put these systems in place

TRAINING GUIDE:

- We cover this in session 2

Successful homestays use easy to follow systems. After you have determined that your family is ready to start a homestay and that you have all the items you need, it is time to learn how to operate a homestay. The first step is to understand the importance of using good systems, so your staff will know what you expect them to do.

2.1. Key Concepts

Staff:

When you open a homestay, you are starting a business. Every business needs staff (the people who work at the business). Your homestay staff will include you, your family members and, possibly, one or more other people that you pay to help with the homestay.

System:

A system is a set of detailed procedures created to accomplish a task. Often, a system can be taught to others by using a clear, step-by-step list of things to do (a checklist). Systems can help you run your homestay smoothly. Benefits of using systems include:

- Using your resources (time, food, water, etc.) wisely
- Keeping your guests happy, so they will recommend your homestay
- Letting your staff know exactly what each person needs to do and how to interact with guests
- Preventing problems and complaints
- Knowing how to handle problems or complaints, if they occur

2.2. Homestay Systems Checklist

If you do not have these systems in place yet, this GPG will give you ideas about how to create them. Use the homestay systems checklist below to identify which systems you already have, which systems need improvement, and which systems you need to create.



1. Complete this table to find out what systems you need and what needs to be improved.
2. Column 1: list of some of the most important systems needed to operate a homestay
3. Column 2: rate each of the systems (1, 2, or 3).
 - a. 1 = a good system already exists
 - b. 2 = the current system needs improvement
 - c. 3 = there is no system yet
4. Column 3: identify who will primarily be responsible for this system (you, your spouse, one of your children, your brother, your sister, an aunt, an uncle, a friend, etc.). Then list the names of people who will help with this system.
5. Column 4: describe actions you will take to improve or create these systems.
6. Column 5: select a target date to have each system clearly organized and in place. Give yourself enough time to discuss each system with those who will be responsible and those who will help. It is important to have agreement from everyone involved before putting these systems in place.

Table 2.2: Systems Checklist

Homestay systems	Rate 1, 2, or 3	Who is responsible? Who will help?	Action plan	Date
Reservations Taking telephone and online reservations; working with travel agencies.				
Guest check-in and check-out Including taking payment from guests.				
Housekeeping Cleaning guest rooms, bathrooms, and common areas.				
Accounting and finance Tracking earnings, expenses, and savings for repairs.				
Problem solving Handling problems that occur with guests or among staff.				
Improving service This must be done continuously in a successful homestay.				

Meals for guests Shopping, cooking, serving, cleaning and preparing the kitchen and dining area.				
Supplies Buying or making supplies and keeping them stocked.				
Maintenance Repairing and improving buildings, grounds, and equipment.				
Other areas Caring for praying rooms, gardens, etc.				
Marketing Promoting the homestay (Internet, travel agencies, tourism bureaus, etc.). Finding and working with marketing partners.				

2.3. Creating a System

Keeping up appearances:

First impressions are very important. As soon as your guests arrive, they should see that your homestay is clean and comfortable. If it is, your guests will want to return and recommend your homestay to others (getting recommendations is the best way to attract new customers).

In this section, you will learn how to create systems to help you keep up the appearance of the exterior and interior of your homestay.

What systems are needed?

- A maintenance system to keep buildings and property in good condition
- A housekeeping system to make sure all areas are cleaned regularly
- An improvement system to make sure you and your staff are always thinking of ways to improve your homestay



Tips

Involving your staff (all the family members and friends who work with you in your homestay) in the development and use of these systems will encourage them to follow the steps needed to operate a successful homestay.



System Checklists

- Make lists of things that must be checked regularly (start with the following three checklists and add other things about your homestay to the lists).
- Have a responsible staff member walk around the homestay with these lists once a week and put a ✓ next to any item that needs attention.
- Record the date that action was taken to repair or improve the item.

Table 2.3.1: Maintenance Checklist

Maintenance system checklist	✓	Date
Gardens: plants tidy and watered; weeds removed		
No broken windows		
No trash or broken items in view around the house		
Handrails installed where needed for safety		
All light bulbs work		
No area is unsafe for guests to walk		
All plumbing works (toilet, sink, shower)		
Paint on the buildings is in good condition		
Bicycles are in good condition		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Table 2.3.2: Housekeeping Checklist

Housekeeping system checklist	✓	Date
Front entrance is clean and attractive		
Floors and stairs are clean and swept		
Sheets, pillowcases, blankets, towels, and tablecloths are clean and without stains		
Windows and walls are clean		
No spiders or bugs in the house		
Guestroom and public areas are clean and attractive		
Wastebaskets emptied		
No dead plants		
Snacks for purchase are stocked and arranged attractively		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Table 2.3.4: Improvement Checklist

Improvement system checklist	✓	Date
Better decorations (flowers, plants, wall-hangings, pictures, etc.)		
More hooks in guest rooms and bathrooms for hanging things		
More shelves in guest rooms		
An extra roll of toilet paper in the bathroom		
Free bottled water in guestroom		
A floor rug for the guestroom		
Cushions for dining room chairs or benches		
Pretty curtains for the windows		
Mosquito netting in guest bedroom (if needed)		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Marketing Your Homestay

3. Marketing Your Homestay

OBJECTIVES:

- Help you to reach out to your potential customers
- Help you to get more business

TRAINING GUIDE:

- We cover this in session 3

3.1. Reaching Your Customers

Who are your customers?

Homestays are becoming more and more popular around the world, but not every traveler is interested in staying at a homestay. Here are the kinds of travelers who enjoy staying at homestays:

- Budget travellers
- Students
- People who want to experience your culture (including the food you eat)
- People who want a unique travel experience
- People who want to avoid commercialism
- Anyone studying your language
- Those who appreciate nature (they especially like to stay in rural homestays)

How can you reach these travelers?

Most of these travelers make bookings on the Internet. Here are some of the websites that would be appropriate for homestays:

- www.homestay.com (Charges 15% commission, paid at time of booking. Traveler pays balance directly to the host family)
- www.homestaybooking.com (Option 1: Charges 10% commission, paid at time of booking. Traveler pays balance directly to the host family. Option 2: Host family can become certified for 19.90 euros and receive 20% up front plus remainder paid directly by the guest.)
- www.airbnb.com (Will have to list homestays under the category "Bed and Breakfast")
- www.tripadvisor.com (Will have to list homestays under the category "B & B")
- http://www.lonelyplanet.com/contact/business_listing/new (You can fill out an application to request to have Lonely Planet review your homestay)
- www.booking.com (Will have to list homestays under "Hostel" or B & B")

Daytime visits

These are a great option. It can take awhile for a homestay business to become profitable. In the beginning, it can be very wise to offer a "daytime visit" option (with no overnight included). Some guests want to have the authentic experience, but still want to sleep in a modern hotel with air conditioning and Wi-Fi. For these travelers, a daytime visit is perfect. It can be a perfect way for a homestay to start earning income quickly.

A daytime visit would include things like:

- Lunch in an authentic local home
- One or more activities (a cooking demonstration, fishing, a bicycle rental for an hour or two, a dancing lesson or demonstration, a musical performance, an agricultural demonstration, a weaving demonstration, etc.)

Regional hotels would be very happy to promote these daytime visits for their guests because it would not compete with their overnight business.

3.2. Marketing Strategy

- You must have a web presence! Most of your guests will find you online.
- List your homestay on as many websites as possible (starting with the 6 sites listed above). New websites appear all the time, so stay current with what is available.
- Register with regional and national tourism offices (leave written information with them—including photos and prices—if possible).
- Establish relationships with:
 - Private sector partners (travel agencies, local guides)
 - Nearby “urban” hotels—to give their guests an opportunity to extend their stay in the area and experience something different
 - Agencies that specialize in student travel
 - Agencies that specialize in small group travel (most appropriate for community based tourism that could accommodate small groups)
- Promote your homestay based on what's in it for the traveler:
 - Genuine, authentic travel experience
 - Unique opportunity to have a personal connection with local culture
 - A rich outdoor experience (if applicable)
 - A taste of real local food
 - Interesting activities (hiking, trekking, fishing, cooking, etc.)
 - Avoid including too many references to aid organizations in marketing message
 - If travelers think the homestay is already well-supported, they may go elsewhere with their travel dollars
- Avoid sounding too commercial
 - Keep the message simple and authentic
 - Don't do a “hard sell” – but do include descriptions and prices for the activities and services that are available for guests
- Make it personal:
 - Include names of family members
 - Tell a bit of the history of the family
 - Include photos of smiling family members in a simple, natural setting
- Make it easy for people to pay (eventually, consider taking credit cards and PayPal payments)



Guest Recommendations

Consider printing simple forms like the one below to have available for guests (both overnight and daytime) to take with them to pass along to other travelers.

Visit a local family in the _____ Region, for a unique and authentic travel experience.

Overnight or **Daytime** visits possible.

Homestay Family:

Telephone:.....

Email:

Address:.....

.....

Please pass this card on!

Thank you, and happy travels.

Budgeting and Pricing

4. Budgeting and Pricing

OBJECTIVES:

- To explore how much it costs to run a homestay
- To explore how much you can charge guests

TRAINING GUIDE:

- This is covered in session 4

4.1. Costs

Think about how much you will have to spend to start a homestay and where you might be able to find the funds.



1. Look at these lists and estimate how much you will have to spend for each item.
2. You could incur one of the following costs:
 - Nothing (\$0)
 - If you already have the item and it is in good enough condition to use now
 - The estimated price of improvement
 - If you have the item but must improve it before you can use it
 - The estimated price of the item
 - If it is something you must buy
 - The estimated price of materials and labour
 - If you have to hire someone to help you build or install it

Table 4.1.1: Costs

Guestroom(s)	Cost	Guestroom(s)	Cost
One or two guest bedrooms		Ceiling or wall light	
Beds with mattresses		Reading lamps by bed(s)	
Pillows		Shelves	
Blankets		Hooks on walls for coats	
Sheets and pillowcases		Window curtains	
Mosquito nets		Floor rug by the door	
Small table		Wastebasket	
Chairs		Decorations (art, flowers)	
Electric wall outlets		Lock for the door	
Subtotal 1		Subtotal 2	
Bathroom	Cost	Dining Area	Cost
Sit-down flush toilet		Table	
Shower with hot & cold water		Chairs and/or benches	
Sink		Tablecloth(s)	
Ceiling or wall light		Plates	
Guest towels		Bowls	
Floor mat by the shower		Cups	
Wall shelves and hooks		Glasses	
Mirror above the sink		Forks, knives, spoons	
Electric wall outlet		Chopsticks	
Toilet paper		Salt and pepper shakers	
Soap		Hot water dispenser	
Wastebasket		Tea, sugar, cream	
Curtains for windows		Napkins (cloth or paper)	
Lock for the door		Decorations (art, flowers)	
Subtotal 3		Subtotal 4	

Total (add the 4 subtotals): _____

When you start a homestay, you will have additional people living in your home. You have to consider how much your expenses will go up for things such as electricity, food, and water when you have guests.



1. Imagine you have 3 couples (6 people) each spending 1 night at your homestay during October. That would be equivalent to having 6 extra people using electricity, food, water, etc. at your house during that month.
2. Estimate how much extra you would have to spend in one month for 6 extra people to stay in your home. Remember, you will have to supply dinner, breakfast, and (possibly) lunch for these guests.

Table 4.1.2: Guest Expenses

Additional Guest Expenses	Estimated Cost
Extra electricity (for lights in guestroom, etc.)	
Extra gas (for cooking guest meals, etc.)	
Extra water (for cleaning, cooking, guest showers, etc.)	
Food for guest meals (including salt, pepper, spices, etc.)	
Supplies of bottled water for guests	
Supplies of other beverages (tea, coffee, cream, etc.)	
Supplies of toilet paper	
Supplies of soap	
Supplies of laundry soap	
Cleaning supplies (cleansers, toilet brush, etc.)	
Light bulbs	
Batteries	
Other	
Other	
Total Additional Guest Expenses	

When you open a homestay, you have to keep all your buildings well maintained and attractive. So you would have to maintain all of the following to a high standard that would appeal to guests (and make guests feel safe and comfortable): Buildings, roofs, stairs, handrails, walkways, garden areas, etc.



1. Think about what kinds of things you would have to repair, maintain, and improve over the course of one year of owning a homestay.
2. Estimate the costs for these annual repairs.

Table 4.1.3: On-Going Maintenance Costs

Additional on-going maintenance expenses	Estimated cost
Paint for buildings	
Wood for repairs	
Hardware (nails, screws, etc.) for repairs	
Materials for roof repairs	
Other	
Other	
Total on-going maintenance expenses	

As you can see, there are many costs associated with running a homestay that many people do not consider in advance. These are real costs you will have to be prepared for if you open a homestay.

Ask yourself:

- Will I be able to make enough money from my homestay to pay for all these additional costs?
- Will I be able to make enough money to earn a profit?
- If I borrow money to start my homestay, will I make enough money to pay my loan back in a reasonable length of time?



Monthly Income and Expenses Chart

Here is a simple chart to keep track of income and expenses at the same time.

Income items include: room charges, snacks, bicycle rentals, cooking demonstrations, fishing activity, cultural activity, packed lunch (for guests to take with them), hiking or trekking activity, etc.

Expense items include: food, bottled water, toilet paper, soap, laundry soap, extra electricity, extra gas, paint, nails, etc.

Table 4.1.4: Income and Expenses

Homestay monthly income			Homestay monthly expenses		
Date	Item	Price	Date	Item	Price
Total			Total		

4.2. Room Prices

The amount you charge your guests to stay at your homestay is an important part of your financial plan.

If you charge X amount for 1 guest to spend 1 night, you cannot think that X amount is your profit and that you can spend that amount on yourself and your family.

Remember you will have on-going costs to keep your homestay open, and those costs must be paid out of the amount you charge your guests. Each week or month, you will have to pay for all the costs associated with your homestay (loans, food, water,

electricity, repairs, improvements, etc.). After you have paid for these things, if there is any money left over, that is your profit. That is the amount you can actually spend on yourself and your family.

How much should you charge your guests? The highest price that many visitors would be willing to pay. How do you decide on this price? You have to do research to find out what other homestays and accommodations charge.



1. Do some market research and reflection to establish a good price for your homestay. You will have to have access to the Internet to do this research.
2. Find out how much other homestays and guesthouses, etc. in your country, region, province, city, town, and village charge for rooms.
3. Compare your homestay to those that are similar to yours. Are those homestays better? If so, in what ways? Are they easier to get to? Are they nicer and more comfortable? Is the family very friendly and welcoming? Are there interesting activities for guests to do? Or, is your homestay better?
4. Base your price on the prices of other accommodation in your area. If your homestay is similar, start by charging the same price (or slightly lower, until you develop a reputation as a good homestay). If your homestay is not as good, start by charging a lower price. If your homestay is better, start by charging a higher price.

Once you establish a price per guest per room, make sure that it is enough to pay for the costs involved and to still have some money left over so you can earn a profit. If you think you can reasonably expect to earn enough to pay for costs and to make an acceptable profit over time, then it will be easier for you to start a homestay. On the other hand, if you think the costs of running a homestay are very high, and that you cannot charge enough to help pay for those costs, then starting a homestay may not be a good idea for you.

4.3. Prices for Activities and Extra Services

Many homestays offer activities for their guests to purchase. This is a good way to earn extra income and make your guests' visit more enjoyable. Here are some typical activities: fishing, hiking or trekking with a guide, cooking demonstrations, arts and crafts demonstrations, agricultural demonstrations, cultural or musical shows, etc.

Extra services include the following: laundry, bicycle rentals, snacks, beverages that are not included with meals (beer, bottled water, juice, etc.), transportation.

To determine how much to charge for activities and extra services, find out how much other homestays, guesthouses, or small hotels charge, and set your prices accordingly.

4.4. Where to Find The Money to Start a Homestay (Start-Up Costs)

Many new businesses must borrow money to get started. The same is true for homestays. If you feel confident your homestay can be successful enough to pay for all the costs involved plus pay you a profit, then it might be worthwhile to borrow the money you need to get started.

If your homestay is already acceptable (safe and clean for guests), then maybe you do not need to borrow money to get started. If you must make some basic improvements before your home is ready for guests, you might have to borrow some money to get started.



Tips

- Borrow only what you absolutely need. Paying back a big loan can be very difficult. Start with a simple but clean homestay and make improvements as your business grows.
- Try to borrow interest-free money. For example, you could borrow from a family member or a friend.
- Find out if your local, regional, or national government has any special loan programmes. For example, those to help family-owned businesses or rural businesses get started. These loans might be interest-free or have a low interest rate.
- Contact your local bank and discuss taking out a loan with the lowest interest rate possible.



Joint Problem Solving and Developing Your Staff

5. Joint Problem Solving and Developing Your Staff

OBJECTIVES:

- Help you to explore problems in your homestay
- Help you to solve problems together with your staff

ACTIVITY BOOK:

- We cover this in session 5

All businesses have problems - even small, family-owned businesses like homestays. Learning to use a problem solving system can help you solve problems quickly and efficiently. It is important to involve your staff in problem solving. Why?

They can improve their skills

- They need less supervision
- They feel like they are valued members of the business
-

5.1. Brainstorming

Three rules for effective brainstorming:

- Encourage everyone to contribute ideas
- Seek as many ideas as possible, even unusual ones
- Make everyone feel safe and comfortable contributing ideas



1. Meet with your staff to identify potential homestay problems
2. Brainstorm to identify potential homestay problems
3. Have everyone contribute ideas about what could go wrong
4. Keep in mind the 3 rules for effective brainstorming
5. Record these below

Table 5.1.1: Brainstorming

Have someone write down all the potential problems here:



1. Practice solving a work related problem with your staff.
2. Choose one problem from your list above.
3. Keeping in mind the 3 rules for effective brainstorming, have everyone suggest ideas for solving the problem.

Table 5.1.2: Joint Problem Solving

Choose one problem from your list, and write it here:

Write the ideas here:

Choose the three best options. Discuss the pros and cons of each. Discuss what you would have to do for each option.

	Pros	Cons	What will it take? Cost, time, materials, etc.
Option 1			
Option 2			
Option 3			

Now choose the best option and write it here:

Write who will take action, what will be done, and when:



Brainstorming and Joint Problem Solving Template

Table 5.1.3: Template to Solve Future Problems

Describe the problem:

Using the 3 steps for effective brainstorming, ask your staff to suggest solutions.

Choose the three best options. Discuss the pros and cons of each. Discuss what you would have to do for each option.

Discuss:	Pros	Cons	What will it take (cost, time, materials, etc.)
Option 1			
Option 2			
Option 3			

Now select the best solution and write (1) who will take action, (2) what will be done, and (3) when.

5.2. Keeping Your Staff Happy

Working in a homestay can sometimes be stressful for you and your staff. For example, it might take awhile to adjust to international standards of cleanliness and service. Yet, to have a successful homestay, these adjustments are necessary.

If your staff are not happy, your guests will notice, and it will make your guests feel uncomfortable. So it is very important to keep your staff happy.

You are the manager of your homestay business. How you treat the people who work

with you (including your family members) can create a happy atmosphere that your guests will notice and appreciate.



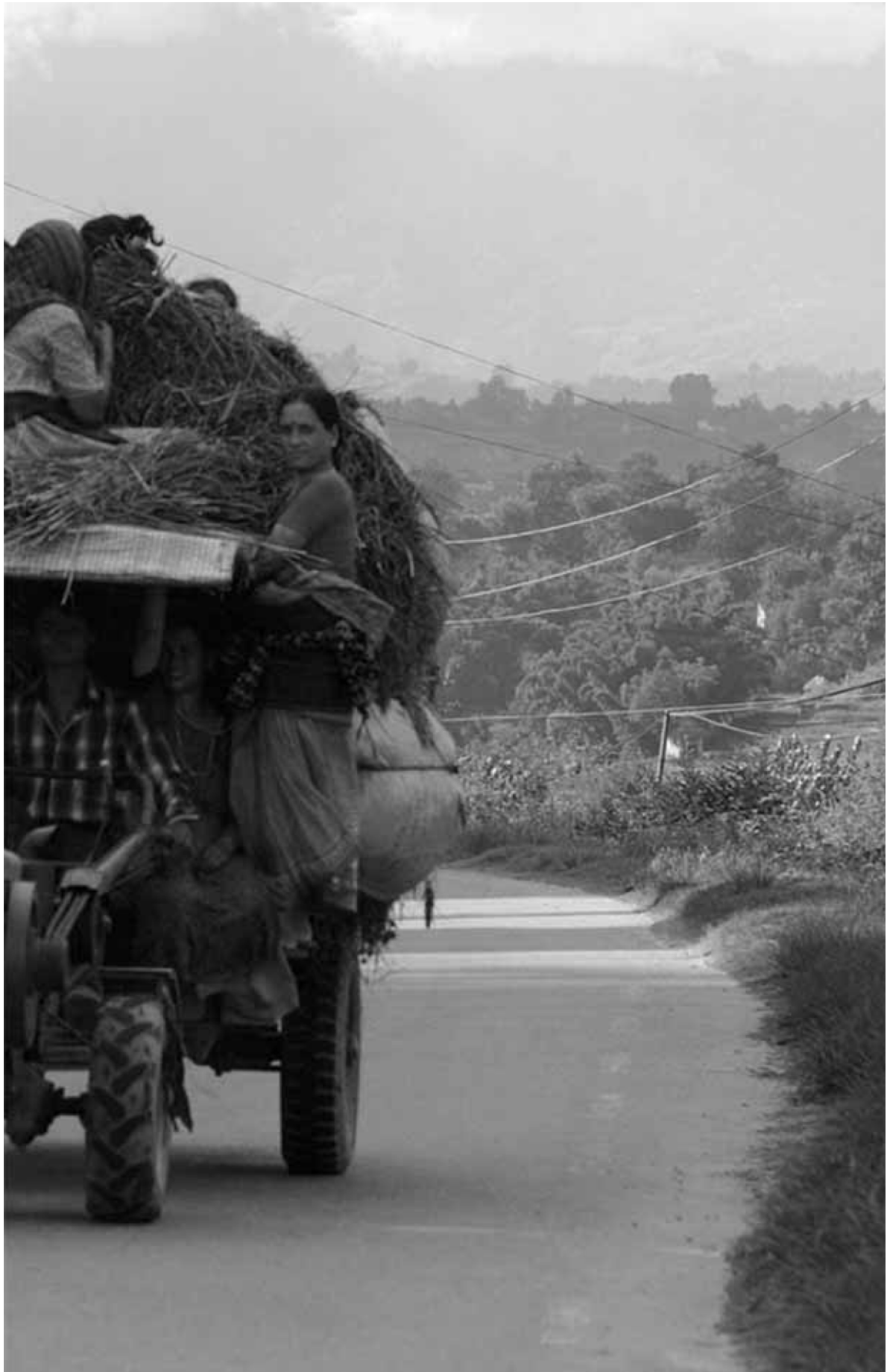
1. Conduct this self-evaluation by asking yourself these questions
2. Put an X in the Yes or No column.

Table 5.2: A successful Homestay is a Happy Homestay

Self-evaluation	Yes	No
Do all my staff members clearly understand what I expect them to do?		
If they do not understand, do I explain it to them in a friendly way?		
Do I compliment each of them every day?		
Do I get angry with them if they make a mistake?		
Do I turn mistakes into opportunities for learning in a positive way?		
Do I treat everyone fairly?		
Do I treat everyone with respect?		
Do I invite their ideas and suggestions and really listen to them?		
Do we take enough time to relax and enjoy each other's company?		
Is there any reason one of them is unhappy?		
If so, can I do something to help?		
Am I ever cruel or unfair to them?		
Do I yell at them or make fun of them?		

List things you can do to make sure your staff feels positive and happy about working at your homestay:





Improving Service

6. Improving Service

OBJECTIVES:

- Help you to serve the needs of your guests better
- Give you tools to ensure consistent service standards

ACTIVITY BOOK:

- We cover this in session 6

6.1. Continual Improvement

Continually thinking of ways to improve your service will make your homestay more successful. Knowing what your guests like and dislike is key to improving your service. The more your guests enjoy staying with you, the more likely they will recommend your homestay to others. Having guests recommend your homestay to others is the best way to find new customers.

How can you find out what your guests like and dislike?

- Ask your staff
- Ask your guests

Learning from your staff:

- Encourage your staff to interact with guests in a positive and friendly way
- Train your staff to pay close attention to what guests like and dislike
- Speak with your staff frequently about what guests like and don't like
- Create a logbook for staff to record guest complaints as they hear them. That way, you can check the logbook throughout the day and act on the complaints immediately
- Your staff will only share the dislikes with you if they feel comfortable telling you the truth
- Always thank your staff for being honest and telling you not only what your guests like, but also what they dislike

Learning from your guests:

- Use guest comment forms to encourage your guests to tell you what they like and dislike (see sample below).
- What do you do if a guest complains?
 - You can apologise.
 - Try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.
 - If you can't resolve the problem while the guest is there, show you care by explaining how you will fix the problem for future guests.
 - Make sure your guests leave with a positive feeling- so they will recommend your homestay to others.



Comment Forms

Many businesses use guest comment forms that invite guests to tell you what they like and to give suggestions for improvements. If you choose to use them, leave one form in the guestroom each time you have guests.

Here is a sample:

[Insert name] Homestay

We value your opinion!

Please take a moment to share your comments and help us improve the [insert name] Homestay.

Name:	
Check-in and Check-out Services	Meal Service
What works well:	What works well:
What needs improvement:	What needs improvement:
Housekeeping	Additional Comments
What works well:	
What needs improvement:	

If you enjoyed your experience at the [insert name] Homestay, would you please recommend us on travel sites like Homestay.com, Trip Advisor, and Lonely Planet.

Thank you very much and enjoy your travels!

6.2. Staff Development Ideas

- Encourage staff to introduce themselves to guests
 - If a staff member has a difficult name, use a simpler version or a simple nickname
 - Consider making easy-to-read nametags for staff members
 - Train staff to learn guests' names and to use their names when speaking with guests (For example, say: "Good morning, Mr Lee.")
- Encourage staff to do extra things to make guest visits more enjoyable.
 - Smile at guests
 - Open doors for guests
 - Put fresh flowers where guests can see them
 - Suggest things for guests to do or places to visit
 - Offer guests a piece of fruit or glass of juice (something that is free or inexpensive for you)
 - If you speak the same language, ask guests about their travels or about where they live
- Encourage staff to learn basic English words and expressions (do the same with other useful languages)

6.3. System: Good Reception Service

Role of receptionists:

Take bookings, check guests in and out, accept payment, make sure the guests are warmly received, answer guests' questions, and help resolve guests' problems.

Having a well-run reception service has many advantages:

- Makes it easy for guests to make bookings
- Builds guests' confidence in your homestay
- Creates a good first impression
- Improves guest satisfaction
- Leads to more positive reviews
- Resolves problems efficiently, and helps prevent problems from occurring
- Shares important information with all staff members in a timely fashion



Ten Steps for Running a Good Service

Using a good reception system will help you keep your homestay friendly and well organized. This section explains how to use a 10-step system for running a good reception service in your homestay.

1. Be friendly and confident when speaking with guests

- Smile when you talk
- Speak loudly enough for guests to hear you comfortably
- Look at the guest when you speak
- Stand up straight with shoulders back in a confident posture

2. Be clean and neat

- Receptionists spend more time with guests, so they always need to be clean and neat
- Pay close attention to hair, fingernails, clothes and shoes
- See Section 7, OSH tool 2: Personal hygiene checklist

3. Keep your bookings well organized

- Receptionists need to make sure rooms are always ready when guests arrive.
- Make sure you never have two guests booked in the same room at the same time (unless they are traveling together)
- The simplest option for tracking bookings is to use a monthly calendar. If your homestay has only one or two guestrooms, this might be sufficient
- If your homestay has more than two guestrooms, you will probably need a more sophisticated system (e.g., a log book or a computer spread sheet)
- See Running your reception tools 1, 2, 3 and 7

4. Answer the phone politely

- Being polite, clear and efficient on the telephone will give your guests confidence in your homestay
- Some tips for good telephone etiquette:
 - Answer the phone within 3 - 5 rings
 - Don't leave guests on hold for more than 30 seconds; if necessary take their number to call them back
 - Keep a pen and paper by the phone to take messages
 - Start the call politely: "Hello, this is the ____ Homestay, how can I help you?"
 - End the call politely: "Thank you for your call, we're looking forward to your stay with us". If you don't understand the caller say: "I'm sorry, could you please speak more slowly?"
- See running your reception tool 4

5. Make advance reservations by telephone

- Collect basic information (arrival and departure dates, number of rooms and people, type of bed)
- Check room availability
- If rooms are available and the rate is accepted, continue the booking
- Collect further information (full name, contact details, arrival time)
- Update room availability calendar
- Send an email to guests to confirm booking
- See running your reception tool 6 and 7

6. Make advance reservations by email

- Taking reservations by email or by SMS is increasingly popular.
- Use the sample email reply and the sample booking confirmation included in this GPG to help you create your own customized email responses.
- When you take a booking, be sure to enter it on the monthly arrivals and departure calendar (see sample below). Or use another system for tracking bookings.
- See running your reception tools 5, 6, and 7

7. Take walk-in reservations

- Be friendly and confident when tourists walk in to ask about a room
- Describe the homestay features, e.g.,
 - Room facilities

- Meal service
 - Included meals
 - Included beverages
 - Location of dining area
 - Meal times
- Other services and activities, e.g.,
 - Snacks, bottled water
 - Laundry service
 - Bicycle rentals
 - Cultural activities
 - Cooking demonstrations
 - Fishing
 - Guided hiking or trekking
 - Transportation
- See running your reception tools 5 and 6

8. Help guests with problems

If a problem occurs, guests will probably want to discuss it with the Receptionist. If so, stay calm and follow these steps:

- Listen to the guest's problem without interrupting
- Apologise
- Discuss a possible solution
- Tell the guest exactly what you will do
- Don't promise the impossible, but try to make the guest happy
- Follow up with guests to make sure they were satisfied



Note

In tourism, we say that "a complaint is a gift," because it gives you a chance to show your guests that you care enough to solve problems for them. If you solve a problem, guests are usually even happier about staying at your homestay.

9. Give good customer service

Giving good customer service is key to running a successful homestay. The Receptionist should give information in a friendly way. Here are things your Receptionist should be able to explain well:

- Details of meal service
- Snacks and beverages (tea, water, etc.)
- Other places to dine in the area
- Internet / Wi-Fi use (if available)
- Location of nearest ATM (if available)
- Lost and found items
- Maintenance problems
- Additional services and activities
- Local transport (buses, tuk-tuks, etc.)
- Regional tourist attractions

10. Check guests in and out

- Keeping a detailed calendar can help you manage check-ins and check-outs smoothly and professionally
- Have guests pay for their room and tax when they check-in
- Have them pay for additional services and activities at check-out

- Give guests a room key, if applicable
- **Check-in:** The Receptionist should explain the following:
 - Meal service
 - Housekeeping service (for guests staying more than one night)
 - Other services and activities
 - The Receptionist should walk with guests to their room as a sign of good customer service. While walking, invite guests to ask questions
- **Check-out:**
 - Have someone check the room to see if anything is damaged or missing. If so, add the charge for repair or replacement to the guest's bill
 - Take payment for any outstanding charges (laundry, activities, etc.)
 - Collect the guest's room key
 - Assist with guest's transportation and luggage (if applicable)
 - See Running your reception tools 8 and 9



Reception Tools

**Table 6.3.1: Guest Check-in System
Tool 1**

Things to check before guests arrive	✓
Registration log book ready (to record guest name, dates of stay, passport number, and country of origin—local government should have samples)	
Monthly arrivals and departures calendar reviewed (see Reception tool 7 below)	
Guest room receipt ready (see Reception tool 8 below)	
Pens or pencils ready	
Tourist info ready (flyers, maps, brochures, etc.)	
All common areas clean	
Walls and ceiling clean	
Fans clean	
Paintings and artwork clean	
Fabrics and rugs clean with no rips	
Windows and sills clean	
Floor swept and mopped	
Floor clear with no obstacles	
Furniture dusted and clean	
Plants watered and trimmed	
Lamps and lighting clean and all bulbs work	
Trash bins clean and empty	
Other	
Other	

Table 6.3.2: On-going Supply List
Tool 2

Items that need to be stocked so you don't run out	Date checked	Need to replace stock?	Date re-stocked
Check in-and check-out forms			
Credit card forms (if needed)			
First aid kit			
Guest comment forms			
Log book			
Paper for printer (if needed)			
Paper for messages			
Pens and pencils			
Receipt books			
Tourist information for guests (flyers, maps)			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			

Table 6.3.3: Telephone Numbers
Tool 3

Important numbers for Receptionist to have at all times	
Owner:	
Staff:	
Police:	
Fire department:	
Doctors:	
Ambulance:	
Hospital:	
Pharmacy:	
Electricity company:	
Gas supplier:	
Water company:	
Internet supplier:	
Rental cars:	
Taxis/tuk-tuks:	
Tour companies:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	

Table 6.3.4: Telephone Message Form

Tool 4

Receptionist (or other staff) should use this form when taking phone messages	
Date:	Time:
Who message is for (name):	
Caller's (name):	
Caller's telephone number:	
Caller's email address:	
Message:	



Tips

1. Repeat the message to the caller to clarify.
2. Deliver the message as quickly as possible.



Note

Tools 5, 6, 8, and 9 should be available in the local language and the languages of countries with the highest number of guests, e.g. Chinese, English, French, Bahasa, Korean, and Japanese.

Tool 5
Email response to booking request

Dear Mr and Mrs Li,

Thank you for your interest in staying with us.

As you requested, we have *[insert number and type of rooms]* available from *[insert requested arrival date]* to *[insert requested departure date]*.

The rooms are priced at *[insert rate(s)]* a night and include *[add package conditions, e.g., dinner and breakfast]*. The tax is *[insert tax]*, so total amount due upon check-in is *[insert amount]*.

You can see pictures of our rooms on our website *[insert web address]*. Shall I reserve the room(s) for you?

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the _____ Homestay.
For further information or to make any changes to your booking, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please refer to our website for details on our booking and cancellation policy.

Sincerely,

Mr/Ms _____

[Insert job title, e.g., Receptionist] _____

Homestay Telephone:

Homestay Website:

Tool 6:
Booking confirmation email

Dear Mr and Mrs Li,

Thank you for choosing to stay with the _____ Homestay. The details of your reservation are confirmed as follows:

Reservation date: *[insert date reservation was made]*

Guest name:

Check in date:

Check out date:

Total number of nights:

Bed type(s): Single / Double

Number of guests:

Room rate:

Tax:

Table 6.3.5: Monthly Calendar

Tool 7

<p>Month: September [insert appropriate month]</p> <p>Number of single - 1 person - (x) overnights: 4</p> <p>Number of double - 2 people - (xx) overnights: 5</p>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	M/M Lee Wang arrive 3PM xx		M/M Lee Wang depart 9AM			Ms. Susie Shue arrive 1PM x
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Ms. Susie Shue depart 11AM		Mr. Lue Kato arrive 6PM x	x	x	Mr. Lue Kato depart ? (time unknown)	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
				M/M Phan arrive 4PM xx	M/M Phan depart 2PM	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		M/M Joe Smith arrive 1PM xx		M/M Joe Smith depart 1PM		
28	29	30	31			

Table 6.3.6: Guest Room Receipt (Take Payment on Arrival)

Tool 8

Date [<i>insert today's date</i>]:			
Guest name:	Check-in date:	Check-out date:	Number of nights:
Room rate:	Tax:	Total (incl. tax) due:	Amount paid:
Guest Signature			
 [<i>Insert name</i>] Homestay Address: Email: Telephone: Website:			

Table 6.3.7: Goods, Services and Activities Receipt**Tool 9a**

Date [insert today's date]:			
Guest name:	Check-in date:	Check-out date	
Description of purchases (bicycle rental, activity, artwork, pottery, laundry, etc.)	Price(s) + Tax:		
Total (incl. tax) due:	Amount paid:		
Guest signature			
[Insert name] Homestay			
Address:			
Email:			
Telephone:			
Website:			

Table 6.3.7: Goods, Services and Activities Receipt**Tool 9a**

Date [insert today's date]:			
Guest name:	Check-in date:	Check-out date	
Description of purchases (bicycle rental, activity, artwork, pottery, laundry, etc.)	Price(s) + Tax:		
Total (incl. tax) due:	Amount paid:		
Guest signature			
[Insert name] Homestay			
Address:			
Email:			
Telephone:			
Website:			

Table 6.3.8: Goods, Services and Activities Receipt

Tool 9b

Guest Receipt			
Guest Name:			
Arrival date		Departure date	
Item	Unit(s)	Price	
Dinner			
Bottled water			
Juice			
Tea/Coffee			
Beer			
Chocolate			
Chips			
Laundry			
Bicycle rental			
Musical show			
Fishing			
Hiking/Trekking			
Cooking demonstration			
Agricultural demonstration			
Cultural demonstration			
Other			
Other			
Total			

6.4. Good housekeeping:

Role of the housekeepers:

To clean and maintain the guest rooms and public areas of your homestay

Having a clean and tidy homestay has many advantages:

- More walk-in business
- You can charge higher room prices
- Guests take better care of your property
- Guests stay longer, relax and buy more items
- More guests return
- More guests recommend your homestay
- Staff have a strong sense of pride
- Fewer health and safety issues (pests, accidents, mould, etc.)



Six Steps for Running a Good Housekeeping Service

Using a good housekeeping system will help you keep your homestay clean and tidy. This section explains how to use a 6-step system to ensure good housekeeping service for all your guests.

Step 1: Entering a guest room

Use a standard system each time you enter a guest rooms. This will help you:

- Increase guests' comfort.
- Increase your efficiency.
 - See Good housekeeping tool 1

Step 2: Using good cleaning procedures

Use a standard cleaning system to save time. To do this you should:

- Have all the cleaning products with you before you start cleaning.
- Follow safety guidelines when using cleaning products.
 - See Good housekeeping tools 2 and 3

Step 3: Cleaning guest rooms

Always clean guest rooms from top (ceiling, lights, walls, windows) to bottom (furniture, floor, trash cans). Using this cleaning system will help you:

- Work quickly

- Avoid missing something
- Avoid having to clean something twice
 - See Good housekeeping tool 4

Step 3: Cleaning public areas

Again, use the system and clean from top (ceiling, lights, walls, windows) to bottom (furniture, floor, trash cans). When cleaning in public areas:

- Do not allow guests to walk on wet floors (use a sign and chairs to block off wet areas).
- Greet guests in a friendly way. Smile and say "Good morning/afternoon/evening Madame/Sir!"

Step 4: Cleaning bathrooms

Remember: Guests can be very sensitive about bathroom cleanliness. Some common complaints include:

- Dirty mirrors
- Dirty toilets
- Hair in the bathroom (bathtub, floor, shower, sink)
- Not enough toilet paper (always leave two rolls in the bathroom)
 - See Good housekeeping tool 5

Step 5: Cleaning stay-over rooms

A stay-over room is a guest room where a guest stays for more than one night. It is important that these rooms look fresh and clean each day, but you do not have to change the linens and towels each day. For long-term guests, offer to change the linens and towels every third or fourth day.

- See Good housekeeping tool 6



Housekeeping Tools

Table 6.4.1: Entering a Guest Room
Tool 1

A: Entering a guest room

1. Knock firmly on the door.
2. Say "Housekeeping" loudly (in English) so people inside can hear you.
3. If there is no answer, enter the room.

4. Leave the door open while cleaning.

B. When guests are in the room

1. Knock firmly on the door.

2. Say "Housekeeping" loudly (in English) so people inside can hear you.

2. If a guest is in the room and answers, say (loudly) "Sorry, I will come back later."

3. Clean other areas or do other tasks.

4. Come back later, knock on the door and say "Housekeeping."

5. If there is no answer, enter the room.

6. Leave the door open while cleaning.

Table 6.4.2: Cleaning Products Checklist

✓

Tool 2

Facemask and gloves

Container to carry cleaning products

- Bleach
- All purpose cleaner
- Glass cleaner
- Toilet cleaner

Bucket

Broom and dustpan

Clean cloths

Insect spray

Bag or container for dirty laundry

Bag or container of supplies:

- Bottled water
- Soap
- Toilet paper

Large trash bag to remove trash

Mop

Scrubbing brush

Toilet brush

Bag or container of clean linens and towels

Table 6.4.3: Do's and Don't of Using Cleaning Products

Tool 3

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Follow manufacturer's instructions ✓ Open windows ✓ Wear a face mask and gloves ✓ Dilute according to manufacturer's instructions ✓ Put caps on tightly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Put cleaning products in unmarked bottles ✗ Mix chemicals ✗ Store near food ✗ Smoke, eat or drink while using the products

Table 6.4.4: Guest Room Cleaning Checklist

Tool 4



Top to bottom cleaning: do each action in this order, systematically cleaning from top to bottom, and each time consistently	
Dust and clean the ceiling (spider webs, mold, dirt)	
Dust and clean walls and woodwork (spider webs, mold, dust and dirt)	
Clean the windows and window sills	
Dust and wet wipe other items (TV, furniture, decorations, doorknobs, fans)	
Sweep and mop the floor	
Empty and clean the trash bins	
Change or remake the beds	
Tidy and arrange everything nicely	
Clean the bathroom	
When finished cleaning	
Close the windows, if appropriate	
Turn off the fans/air conditioning	
Turn off the lights	
Close and lock the doors	

Table 6.4.5: Bathroom Cleaning Checklist

✓

Tool 5

Wear a facemask and gloves	
Clean the ceiling	
Clean the walls (use bleach and a scrubbing brush to remove mold)	
Clean the shower curtain or door with a scrubbing brush	
Clean the toilet	
Clean the mirror using glass cleaner and a dry cloth	
Clean all shelves and other fixtures using a wet cloth	
Rinse and wipe the sink	
Restock bathroom supplies (toilet paper, soap)	
Clean the floor (sweep, then mop)	
Make sure there is no hair anywhere (sink, shower, toilet, wall, floor)	
Empty and clean the trash bin	

Table 6.4.6: Stay-over Room Cleaning Checklist

✓

Tool 6

Clean guest room as usual	
If bedding is still fresh, just remake the bed—if not, change the linen	
Move guest's items only to clean under them	
Empty and clean the trash bins	
Clean and restock bathroom as usual	

6.5. Meal Service



Three Steps for Running a Good Meal Service

Using a meal service system will help you keep your dining area clean and attractive. It will help you serve meals in a friendly, efficient way.

Step 1: Preparing the dining area

- Prepare the dining area before your guests arrive
- Make sure any staff in contact with food maintain high personal hygiene standards

Step 2: Serving meals

- Smile and be friendly while serving meals
- Be attentive to guests' needs
- Explain what is included
- Try to accommodate simple requests if possible

Step 3: Cleaning up after meals - when the meal service is finished:

- Clean the dining area
- Prepare whatever you can for the next meal service

Table 6.5.1: Preparing Dining Area Checklist**Tool 1**

Clean the dining area from top to bottom (ceiling, walls, furniture, floor)	
Arrange tablecloth, napkins, chopsticks, knives, forks, spoons, glasses, cups, etc.	
Place clean condiments on table as needed (salt, pepper, seasonings, sauces etc.)	
Prepare beverage service (coffee, tea bags, hot water, milk, sugar etc.)	

Table 6.5.2: Serving Meals Checklist**Tool 2**

Greet guests as they arrive	
When guests are seated, explain what food and drink will be served	
Offer guests beverages (water, coffee, tea)	
Serve the food to guests as it is ready	
Try to accommodate simple meal requests, e.g., some people do not eat meat	
When guests leave, smile and say "Thank you, have a nice day" (or evening)	
Clean tables and dining area after guests leave	

Table 6.5.6: Cleaning Up After Meals Checklist**Tool 3**

Clean tables and chairs (or benches) – remove all spills and crumbs	
Clean floor	
Clean and refill condiments (salt, pepper, spices, etc.)	
Clean and refill accessories (napkins, toothpicks, etc.)	
Arrange condiments and cutlery either neatly on the table or stored away	
Put dirty tablecloths, cloth napkins etc. in the laundry	
Sweep and mop the floor	
Wash and dry cups, glasses, plates, forks, spoons, knives, chopsticks, etc.	
Review supplies and re-stock items as needed	

Safety & Health

7. Safety & Health

OBJECTIVES:

- Improve safety and health for those working in the homestay and for guests
- Give you tools and checklists to ensure good safety and health standards in your homestay

ACTIVITY BOOK:

- We cover this in session 7

When you operate a homestay, you are responsible for the safety and health of your guests and staff. Maintaining good safety and health standards in your homestay will help you attract guests, grow your business, and give you peace of mind.

This section gives an overview of the different areas of safety and health that relate to your homestay. Sample checklists are included that you can change, if needed, to suit your needs. Share the information with your staff so they can follow the tips and advice and keep your homestay standards high.



Note

- You can keep safety and health standards high in your homestay at little cost.
- Failing to maintain high standards will reduce the number of guests who will stay at your homestay.
- You can prevent some accidents and problems by following basic safety and health systems.
- Not all accidents and problems can be prevented, but knowing in advance how to respond to them can limit damage and losses.

7.1. Occupation Safety and Health (OSH):

Accident prevention:

Many accidents can be prevented with careful planning. Using a system of regular maintenance of your buildings, tidying and cleaning common areas and keeping guest rooms secure can prevent injuries or damage to personal items. Making sure your staff members wear clothing that is safe, and that they all know how to use equipment safely can reduce accidents at work and improve your standards (see OSH tools 1 and 2).

Good Hygiene:

It is important that you and your staff follow a system of good hygiene for the workplace, such as regularly washing your hands and keeping hair tied back when cooking (see OSH tool 3).

Fire safety:

You can reduce the risk of fire by following an accident prevention system that includes maintaining equipment, frequently checking gas and electric circuits, regularly tidying corridors and keeping corridors and doors unobstructed. Fires often take people by surprise. Creating a fire safety checklist can limit damage (see OSH tool 4).

Pest control:

Following a basic hygiene and cleanliness system in your homestay can help keep pests away (see OSH tool 5)

Accident response:

Having accident response systems in place can help limit damages if accidents occur.

First aid:

Do you have a first aid kit to treat small injuries and illnesses? Is it easy to access, and do all your staff members know where it is? Does it have all the items you need and are they within their expiry date? (see OSH tool 6)

Fire response:

What plan do you have in case a fire occurs? Would you and your staff know what to

do? Maintaining a fire response checklist and running regular fire drills can help you save lives and limit damage to your property (see OSH tool 7)



OSH Checklists

Table 7.1.1: Do's and Don't's of Homestay Safety and Security for Managers
Tool 1

DO:	DON'T:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Keep corridors and common areas lit. ✓ Put handrails on all stairways. ✓ Put locks on windows and doors. ✓ Maintain steps and stairs in good condition. ✓ Make electric outlets grounded (earthed). ✓ Maintain fire extinguishers. ✓ Keep your first aid kit well stocked. ✓ Practice fire and accident drills with your staff. ✓ Block off wet floors when cleaning to prevent people slipping. ✓ Repair broken equipment. ✓ Let staff (including you) rest when sick. ✓ Wear strong, supportive shoes. ✓ Wear a mask and gloves when working with toxic chemicals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Leave obstructions in public areas or fire exits. ✗ Install any hooks at eye level. ✗ Allow domestic animals in kitchen or dining area. ✗ Allow unsafe knife usage. ✗ Lock fire exits. ✗ Leave valuable items unattended. ✗ Use broken equipment. ✗ Over-work your staff. ✗ Carry things higher than eye level. ✗ Leave guestroom doors unlocked. ✗ Move or lift heavy items alone. ✗ Stretch too far while on a ladder. ✗ Touch electric sockets with wet hands. ✗ Try to fix something yourself if it is not safe - ask someone to help.

Table 7.1.2: Personal Hygiene Checklist for Staff Who Interact With Guests Tool 2	
Have I:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathed or showered today? • Used deodorant? • Brushed my teeth today? • Cleaned and trimmed my fingernails? • Washed my hands after every time I used the toilet? • Washed my hands before and after eating? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worn clean, neat clothes? • Worn shoes and clothes that are safe to work in? • Used a band-aid to cover open cuts? • Covered my mouth when I coughed or sneezed? • Thrown dirty tissues away immediately?

Table 7.1.3: Fire Safety Checklist Tool 3	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install smoke alarms in each guestroom (if possible). • Post evacuation procedures on the back of each guestroom door. • Practice evacuation procedures with your staff on a regular basis. • Choose a safe place to evacuate to. • Keep fire extinguishers on each floor. • Ensure an easy exit from each guestroom (2 ways recommended; for example, through a door and through a window). • Have a safe means for all occupants to reach the ground floor. • Ensure that all windows and doors can be opened in case of fire. • Know and comply with all local and national fire codes. 	

Table 7.1.4: Pest Control Checklist

✓

Tool 4

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check stored food supplies for signs of pests.• Store all food in sealed containers.• Clean up spills and crumbs quickly.• Do not leave food scraps exposed.• Make sure doors and windows close tightly.• Seal holes and cracks in floors and walls.• Seal openings around pipes.• Keep storage areas clean and dry.• Keep lids on all trash bins.• Clean and disinfect trash bins often.• Keep all equipment clean.• Trim plants regularly.• Insist on a high level of cleanliness.	
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Table 7.1.5: Accident or Emergency Checklist

✓

Tool 5

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take everyone involved to a safe place.• Call for help if needed (use the receptionist's emergency telephone numbers).• Help the injured if possible (use your well-stocked first aid kit).• Find out what caused the accident or emergency and try to limit the damage.• Later, discuss how you can prevent the accident or emergency from recurring.	
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Table 7.1.6: First Aid Kit Checklist (Suggested Items)

✓

Tool 6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antiseptic cream • Bandages in various sizes and shapes • Sterile pads • Cotton wool packs • Surgical tape • Safety pins • Clinical thermometer • Painkiller (aspirin) • Tweezers • Mosquito lotion (calamine) • Scissors • Other? 	
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Table 7.1.7: What To Do in Case of Fire Checklist

✓

Tool 7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alert people in the area so they can move to safety. • Turn on the fire alarm. • Call the fire department immediately. • If in doubt, evacuate the buildings. • Take guests and staff quickly but calmly to a safe place. • Remove all cash, if possible. • Take the Monthly Arrivals and Departures Calendar, if possible. • Close doors and windows, if possible. • Turn off the fuel or heat source (gas or electricity), if possible. • Keep phone lines open. • Be vigilant in case of theft. • Use fire extinguishers, if it is safe. • Do not use water on a fire involving fat, oil, or electrical equipment. • Wrap blankets around someone whose clothes are on fire to put out flames. • Call for an ambulance or medical help, if necessary. 	
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**Individual
Homestay or CBT
Homestay?**

8. Individual Homestay or CBT Homestay?

OBJECTIVE:

- Help you to understand the benefits of community-based tourism
- To help you ensure that tourism positively impacts the community

TRAINING GUIDE:

- Is this an optional session

Some people prefer to open an individual homestay while some prefer to join with other households in the community and create a cooperative homestay, also known as a community-based tourism (CBT) homestay. Typically, individual homestays work best in urban areas and CBT homestays work best in rural areas.



DEFINITION: Community Based Tourism

Community-based tourism is socially sustainable tourism that is usually initiated and operated exclusively by local and indigenous people. Shared leadership emphasizes community well-being over individual profit, balances power within the community, and promotes traditional culture, conservation, and responsible stewardship of the land.

If you and your community are interested in creating a CBT homestay programme, here are some things to consider:

Benefits of CBT Homestay	Challenges of CBT Homestay
Can offer more activities and services	Establishing rules to fairly rotate guest visits among households
Easier to do sales and marketing (flyers, website, sales calls, visits to tourism offices, etc.)	Creating fair and effective organizational and leadership structures
Possibly take bookings and payments through a central "office"	Ensuring equal work and commitment from all members
Possibly attract outside funding, including donations	Maintaining similar levels of quality among member households
Possibly attract assistance for training and skills development	Resisting pressure to add households if demand is not strong enough to support them
Backup in case there are problems with an individual homestay	Finding donor funding for future households
Local peer support and idea-sharing	Becoming too dependent on outside funding or assistance
If done fairly, can strengthen a sense of community	If not done fairly, can create anger and friction within the community



Tips

- Determine if there are enough potential visitors to justify opening several homestay households in the community
- Evaluate the infrastructure (roads, water, electricity, etc.) and make sure these are all in good order
- Create a legal cooperative with joint community ownership
- Create a management board made up of members of the community, and with board members voted on by the community
- Write a management document that specifies rules of engagement that are fair, just, inclusive, practical, and transparent (e.g. open for review by any members). The document must include clear rules about when and how to accept new households

- Use a community-wide approach to develop facilities, infrastructure, activities, and worker and manager skills
- Focus on skills development, obtaining funding, infrastructure development, management structures, sales and marketing (including branding and brand management)
- Consider selecting an established private travel agency with significant market reach to act as the primary sales and marketing arm for your CBT. Consider having this private travel agency take bookings and payments
- Avoid getting too commercial and losing authenticity. Tourists will stop coming if local people seek payment for every small service. For example, charging a fee to pose for a photograph
- Strive to have as much training as possible. Treat English language training as a necessity
- Prepare and print handouts for guests with key words listed in multiple languages (Chinese, English, French, Bahasa, Korean, Japanese, etc.).
- Find and distribute English language learning materials for those community members who most directly serve international visitors
- Create an on-going community development fund (for example, 1% - 5 % of revenue) to benefit the entire community and not just the CBT households. This helps the entire community embrace the success of the CBT homestays. It also encourages them to be friendly and welcoming to visitors.
- If demand is strong, and additional households can be added, create a loan programme to help them with start-up costs. This is especially important if the initial CBT households benefited from outside start-up funding that is not available for additional households later.



Sample Audit Checklist

To ensure consistent quality among CBT homestays, use a homestay audit to evaluate the quality of individual homestay households.

- It works best to have a team of 3 fair, impartial people do the homestay audits for each house.
- Homestay audits should be repeated regularly (perhaps every 6 months).

Homestay Audit

Area of homestay	Good	Needs improvement	Comments
Outside walkway			
Gate/entrance			
Yard/garden			
Animal stables			
Lighting			
Air ventilation			
Bathroom			
Toilet			
Shower			
Guestroom			
Dining area			
Common areas			
Kitchen			
Overall cleanliness			
Attractiveness			



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