

# Stronger Clubs - Innovative Programs

## Working together for the future...

Question 1.

### What should a Journey look like in our 5<sup>th</sup> decade?

- It should be recorded online
- **More physical activities**
- Less group activities – more individual activities
- Break from hosting with a 2-day trip (Vancouver sends their ambassadors to Victoria)
- Long Island, NY, suggests ambassadors add 2-3 days to see NYC
- San Francisco has a similar situation – club is based outside city
- Bratislava programs in 2-day trip to the Tatra mountains, mid-journey
- **Multi-generational**
- Flexible. One week of homestay and one of hotel stay with day-hosting.
- Inclusive of various ethnicities and those with disabilities
- **More global exchanges** – particularly those which are less expensive.
- **Different levels of activity within the one journey**
- Keep it fun
- Food - cooking focused
- More free time with hosts
- **Consider shorter exchanges**
- **More flexible options – less rigid agenda**
- More informal welcome/farewell events
- **More options for physical activity**
- **Part time in a hotel (including possibility for day-hosting)**
- **Less tourism, more authentic experiences**
- Nature & Culture
- Family oriented
- **Humanitarian**
- More activities to attract men: fishing, golf, **habitat for humanity**
- Partially **themed** journeys
- Traditional journeys – traditional model
- Take care to keep prices economical – particularly for extensions
- Volunteering for a charity during journeys
- Shorter journeys
- Combined (?) exchanges
- More individual journeys
- More service
- More intergenerational, especially children, grandchildren – family themed
- Journeys with a purpose
- Learning journeys
- Shorter journeys within the same continent
- Include more day-hosting to enable working people to host

- Understand that we are mission based -get involved in community activities – become known, it's not just travel...
- Experiment with new structures
- More hotel stays – organise program in common with locals e.g. real life events – music, dance, wine/food/cabaret/arts festivals

Question 2.

**What, in your opinion, is an innovative program?**

- Welcoming program
- Different programs
- Highlighting local attractions/'selling' local clubs to others
- Engaging programs
- Good networking programs
- Interesting activities which attract younger generations
- Some concern about unproven programs and whether they work?
- Mississippi River journey
- Discover the Outback (Australia)
- Advertise beyond FF membership
- Adopt programs to promote your area
- Open World Program (US Govt) has led to new club formation
- Finding a way to include those not near a club
- Tandem exchange. Weekend + short tour + another weekend. Allows working members to host.
- More community involvement
- More **humanitarian** element
- **Themed journeys**
- **Active themes** sport, hiking, biking, golfing
- Member recruitment during international inbounds
- Create program on ambassador arrival – provide options
- **Shorter journeys**
- Include other clubs in journey
- Involve a local charity in a journey
- Higher activity level
- Include new activities by expanding planning committee
- Include optional high activity/adventure
- Include choices, using member experts
- Adventure/mystery
- **Use local cultural event as focus e.g. local festivals, events, music, food, wine**
- Learning journeys
- Language immersion journeys
- 'Interest' journeys e.g. cooking classes, theatre, arts
- Around International events – sporting, cultural
- **Journeys during holiday breaks**
- **Anything we haven't been doing so far** – something stimulating and fresh
- Civil War theme – PA & WV combined
- President s tour

- Chicago/Northern Illinois combined International Film Festival
- **Plantation/garden week in VA – gardens, gardening & ecology**
- Use local popular resources and events
- Something which clearly distinguishes FF from Airbnb, Couch Surfers etc
- Meet young people and participate in activities they enjoy
- Bird-watching
- Celebrating history

Question 3.

**What can we do to make Friendship Force attractive to younger generations?**

- Associate membership (Nara club has this in place) No dues payable but invited to all events and are able to host at suitable times.
- Reduced fees for students
- Some clubs, Moldova in particular, have very youthful membership
- Promote the need for friendship today (more important than 40 years ago)
- Stop holding meetings at 'old people places'
- Use local style language
- Be careful not to appear to be promoting a religion
- **We need knowledge of how to promote ourselves on all social media sites**
- Moldova TV covered San Francisco journey there 3 times
- Moldova recruits host families
- Serbian Open World program gained wide coverage by CNN when they brought a 'personality' with them (possibility for US clubs)
- Live stream on Facebook
- Family membership to encourage younger members
- Choose meeting venues which are attractive to younger people
- Flexible meeting times, allowing for working people – include activity/sport
- Exciting activities
- More journeys planned for school recesses
- Instead of generations, appeal to those interested in our mission
- Keep inbound journey programs fresh to keep members interested
- Multigenerational
- Affiliate with Lifelong Learning at university & partner with the members 50+
- Affiliate with international military JAG program
- **Contact foreign university students and offer social activities**
- Volunteer at international festivals
- Inter-club weekends away
- More free time
- Shorter trips
- 10-day trips
- More variety
- More alternatives
- More social
- Fewer business meetings
- Local Talks

- Seek out newly retired (one participant reported great success by leaving information at his financial adviser's office)
- **Actively using social media** – we need daily Facebook postings
- Activities that make for great 'selfies'
- Create a 'younger persons' network – develop some journeys for young singles
- **Family to Family program**
- More attention to keeping costs of journeys down – both for travelling and hosting
- Volunteer in schools
- Organising events, changing themes, including multi-cultural, food etc
- Keep travelling groups 'young at heart' vital and active

Question 4.

What outstanding practices has your club adopted?

- Associate Membership (no dues) who can assist with hosting for shorter programs. Are invited to welcome & farewell parties, along with their families. (Nara)
- Fund raising – using auctions
- Raffle for those who bring guests to a meeting (Utah)
- Strong program at each meeting
- Experience other cultures within your community (Manitoba)
- 'Get to know your neighbour' club journeys (Long Island)
- Interactive Calendar on website (Long Island)
- Must pay FFI fee & International club host fee, even if in same region
- Members encouraged to bring guests to meetings – always recognised and welcomed (SRQ?)
- Mentoring (buddy system) helps with membership retention (Baton Rouge)
- Suggestion system in place (Baton Rouge)
- Monthly lunch – bring/invite guests (Baton Rouge)
- Explore our own area (Baton Rouge)
- Active Facebook use (Taupo NZ)
- Meet at a vibrant café in centre of town (Taupo)
- Meet in Vibrant bar
- **5<sup>th</sup> at 5** - On 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, meet at 5pm at a different restaurant for dinner (Charleston, W. Virginia)
- Cottage days May-Sep. Social with info for potential members (North Bay)
- **Trying to use Meetup system** (Chicago & San Francisco) Advertise events here.
- **Welcome events open to community – increase awareness of community**
- International Dinner in a great venue – gave recipes, invited many – 80 attended – used a running video/slide show in background (like a sorority rush?) gained 7 members. (Chicago)
- Central VA had 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration – members brought friends (club paid) achieved 11-12 new (or renewed) members. Recruited 26 new members in 2 years.
- Advise media of all events – welcomes, farewells – and invite community
- At each pre-meeting dinner, members take a number to see which table they will sit at – ensuring membership knows each other well and no cliques are established.