

2016 FFI World Conference – Marrakesh, Morocco

Unconference Workshops

Unconference Workshop Topics

- Grandparent/Intergenerational Exchanges
- Club Promotion in Traditional and Social Media
- Language Challenges in Exchanges
- Health, Mobility, and Ability
- Innovation in Hosting and Themes
- Packing Light
- Service and Volunteerism/Voluntourism with FFI
- Leadership and New Club Development

Summaries and Takeaways from Delegates:

- Facebook is used by many clubs, but more strategy is needed for effective recruitment use
- Solutions for language issues included translation programs and apps on computers and smartphones, along with more advanced preparation regarding language for both incoming and outgoing exchanges
- Finding a native speaker or person knowledgeable in a language before an outbound exchange is a good way for a club or group to pick up useful phrases and greetings, as well as gain cultural knowledge and insight prior to an exchange
- Full disclosure of health and mobility up front from all ambassadors is needed; One solution is to partner those with mobility concerns with another ambassador at the start of the exchange
- Clubs need to be transparent about both mobility and potential weather challenges prior to exchanges (with alternative solutions available); Exchange Directors on both sides should be aware of all mobility limitations prior to an exchange
- Many ideas for innovative exchanges were brought forth, including involving children and grandchildren during portions of an exchange, splitting hosting to help working members, having at least two leisure/unscheduled days during an exchange or even a day alone in the community if desired
- Other innovative ideas included involving students in a language school and volunteering locally as a day activity
- Club development ideas included starting small and always having an assistant ED to share the work
- One club uses shadowing (interning) for all club responsibilities, building up expertise among the newer members for positions such as inbound and outbound EDs, and other club responsibilities. This is a great way to get new members involved and educated in the various club roles, by doing rather than just reading about what is involved.
- Suggestions for ways to focus on service and giving back included doing away with club gifts and instead identifying and donating to a local charity; visiting a non-profit and volunteering while on exchange, inviting

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a Little Brother/Sister to inbound events or activities; collecting donations after the exchange (or at the conclusion) to send to the organization visited on exchange

- Other suggestions for volunteering/service opportunities include working with local Peace Corp volunteers, homeless/veteran aid, schools for developmentally disabled, women's health clinics
- Ideas for themed exchanges included highlighting local activities and culture of an area that might be little-known or overlooked, especially in favor of larger or more well-known cities or regions; in some cases, the topic of the themed exchange can outweigh the location of the club hosting the exchange
- Themed exchanges also can support nearby clubs who have not been assigned inbound exchanges
- Many suggestions for new methods to facilitate and organize service opportunities during exchanges were brought forth by delegates, including forming committees and forums to be able to share ideas and best practices
- On gaining more publicity for FFI and its activities, one member highly encourages personal engagement of chapter members with regionally-relevant journalists and bloggers, with a long-term focus. Individual members of a FFI chapter should adopt a particular reporter/editor/blogger so a club could be talking to different ones via different members, but make it seem friendly and exclusive. If something does get written, provide feedback to the author and share with FFI HQ as well
- Also with publicity, "individualized" and "friendly" are key words to use in talking about Friendship Force. Suggestions were to treat writers as people who need help in getting their work done. Don't be discouraged if they don't respond right away. Let them decide what they want to write about.