

**Stronger Clubs - Innovative Programs**

**Working together for the future…**

Question 1.

**What should a Journey look like in our 5th 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 have 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
* **5th at 5** - On 5th 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 40th 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.