

Training - Outbound Exchanges

January 2011

Things to consider for Exchange Directors

- DO establish contact early with host ED – seek assistance from FFO VP Exchanges, if needed
- DO define the beginning and the end dates of the exchange (e.g arrival at the meeting point and departure from the host airport) vis-à-vis responsibility.
- Check passport termination dates, and visa requirements for any country to be visited.
- When traveling to remote, or less accessible destinations, DO try to build into the travel schedule time to recover from jet lag (e.g. stopover in Hong Kong en route to S-E Asia) and/or inform Host ED not to plan a Welcome Party on the day of arrival
- When planning a double or triple exchange, DO try to provide “down time” between the different exchanges, allowing time to recover from intensive exchange programs
- When faced with a lack of response from the host club or host ED over a considerable period of time, DO contact the FFO VP Exchanges and then the appropriate FFI Program Coordinator
- When the list of potential ambassadors contains several single FFO members, DO enquire about the preferences of the single members for sharing accommodation (i.e. night host) with other single members. DO NOT force single ambassadors to pair
- When traveling to a less comfortable destination, or going on an exchange with a physically demanding program, DO make sure that potential ambassadors with physical limitations are advised at an early stage and, if necessary, are discouraged from participating in the exchange. If unsuccessful, contact the FFO VP Exchanges to request guidance and assistance
- DO send matching information to the host ED as early as possible to give them ample time to identify/confirm suitable night hosts
- DO ensure Ambassadors know they each have to handle their own luggage at all times especially in night host homes. A mid-sized suitcase with wheels plus an easy to carry carry-on bag should be adequate for everybody.
- DO ensure that any Ambassador’s special needs are identified to the host ED to assist in matching (i.e.: allergies, non-smoking, etc). Ask the host ED about elevators in apartment buildings and any other conditions that must be considered
- DO discuss program activities with the host ED and attempt to determine if there will be any optional outings at additional cost. If so, get group agreement and arrange for payment.
- Find out from the Host ED how the hosting fees are to be transferred. FFI and FFO do not have fixed policies. Contact the FFO Treasurer to obtain guidance and assistance

- Have a contingency fund for unexpected expenses (e.g. group tips, taxis in case of emergency situation, etc). DO take financial accountability seriously with reports on expenditures from the Exchange slush fund. Discuss use of unspent money, otherwise return to the ambassadors.
- DO discuss need for official greeting. If greeting mayor, get letter of greetings from mayor of Ottawa and a token gift. If a civic reception is planned, determine from the host ED how formal an event it will be.
- DO discuss “official” gifts with the host ED. It is acceptable to indicate that FFO prefers contributing to a local charity rather than doing Club-Club, ED-ED gift exchanges. However, if the host club favors gifts, then this should be respected. Discuss cultural suitability and cost level. In some countries gift giving is taken seriously (e.g. Japan, Flanders).
- Ambassadors should have gifts for their night host, and smaller gifts for dinner hosts, day hosts. Some suggestions re Canadiana shops: National Gallery, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Four Corners, Pewter shop. Gifts: for hosts, day hosts, dinner hosts, children. Also club pins, Canada pins. Budget +/- \$50 - \$75.
- DON'T take national flags as gifts. DON'T sing national anthem unless requested by host club. However some clubs collect and display country flags of the inbound clubs so find out and determine the desired size. Do take the Canadian flag from the club inventory (Contact is Janet Sterling) and be ready to display (e.g. at the welcome party).
- Advise ambassadors to carry name, address & phone number of hotels en route and hosts' emergency contacts and to keep a copy at home or with a friend. DO provide Ambassadors with a phone number at the destination in case of missed/delayed flights. If possible, take a cell phone that works in the host country
- Advise ambassadors to ensure their emergency contact at home has their itinerary and contact information (i.e: night host, hotels, flights, etc)
- Provide a copy of the Ambassador information, including emergency contacts, to the Exchange Deputy ED, the VP Exchanges, and maintain a copy with you at all times during the trip
- Establish group travel arrangements and have all Ambassadors who travel separately inform you – and keep you updated – of their pre-exchange travel plans. It is strongly advised to establish a single place and time for all Ambassadors to meet the hosts at the start of the exchange
- Use a system of baggage identifiers for the group, e.g. pipe cleaners.
- With large groups, a system of “head counters” can help to keep track of 4 – 5 couples each.
- Ensure that all know which debit cards and credit cards actually work in the country. ATMs in foreign countries accept only 4 digit PINs. Strongly encourage ambassadors to inform their credit card company of their travel plans to avoid cancellation of card

- DO work up a (short) entertainment program for the farewell party. Learn a few songs the group can sing when the occasion arises. Make sure the entertainment is appropriate based on the level of English understood/spoken by the host club
- Ensure all ambassadors are made aware that it is mandatory they follow the entire program offered by the host club. DO make sure Ambassadors are aware that in case a hosting activity can't be attended, they are to advise the FFO ED who will advise the host ED.
- Ensure that all know how to contact you (include host's cell phone) and to keep you informed of any difficulties they may have with host, accommodations, medical issues, etc. It is the responsibility of the FFO ED/Deputy ED to sort out problems with the host ED
- Be prepared in advance to say a few words on behalf of the group, greetings, thanks, etc., as the occasions arise. Have a suitable grace in your back pocket.
- Consider asking each ambassador to be responsible for a day of journaling during the trip. At the end of the trip, a volunteer can consolidate and share with all ambassadors
- Wrap up documentation includes: a Thank you letter to the host ED, Exchange Report to FFO VP Exchange, Budget Report to FFO Treasurer, and an Evaluation Report to FFI
- **BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED.**