



MANUAL FOR EXCHANGES INVOLVING STUDENTS AND COUNTRIES WITH A MUSLIM CULTURAL BACKGROUND

AFS-EFIL / EEE-YFU
2nd to 9th December 2007
Budapest Hungary

Organisation: AFS-
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involving people with a
Muslim cultural background
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Youth For Understanding



Orientation (Hosting/Sending)

| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
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| Finding host families: practical incompatibilities, stereotypes | | |
| Families often think that the student should be treated as a guest and that they should adapt their lifestyle accordingly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify that the student should be treated as a family member | |
| Egypt: most families don't want to host boys because the girls would have to wear the veil all the time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform sending AFS organisations to encourage girls to be sent - Look for families who have host brothers only | |
| Non muslim families have prejudices against muslim and think they will need to adapt their lifestyle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify the difference between muslim from Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. - For the students that practice the most this is what may not be negociable: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ramadan: no big party needed, you can just leave the food from supper and they will warm it up when they are ready to eat. They are used to having people eat in front of them, even within their families (girls do not fast during their periods so they make up for it later when everyone is done). 2. Wear the veil. 3. Pray: student needs a private place (bedroom for example). The place should be clean so no animal should be allowed in that room. The student needs to clean themselves first. The participant should wipe off the water from the floor after the use (but they dont always do it in their home country). Girls dont need a mosque to pray. For some boys it can be important to pray in a Mosque on Friday but it's not indispensable. 4. Food: some don't eat pork and dont drink alcohol. | |



Living with the family: understand rules and counselling

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| Egypt: Dress code requires to wear sleeves, clothes under the knees and hide belly and families dont always dare to tell the student what they should not wear. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include dress code in Egypt country handbook - Add the question to the form when visiting the family - Young counsellor for the student and older counsellor for the family - Send experienced counsellors to visit the family - Train volunteers who visit the families - Orientation camps for families | - AFS Belgium is already doing that |
| Egypt: if a girl student gets a boyfriend in Egypt during her stay, she should not kiss or sleep with him. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify that boyfriend in Egypt means „holding hands“. The student should talk to their family if they have issues with that. - Discuss this issue with host mother rather than host father | |
| Egypt: you can not challenge the opinion of your host parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare the students at the time of orientation - Depending on the family, the student should ask the family in a very respectful way or ask their counsellor if it is possible or not. | |
| Egypt: Mostly, families accept that students can sleep over night at a friend’s house under certain circumstances (ex: birthday party) Still it depends on the family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A girl can stay with a girl and a boy can stay with a boy. | |

Hosting a Non Muslim in a country with Muslim cultural background

| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
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| - Promote countries with Muslim cultural background (e.g. Tunisia/Turkey/... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide specific information about the country (society/religion’s importance and daily practice/influence) - give a successful example to Press/Medias as well as to the organisations of partner or potential partner countries | -Italian participant in Tunisia won an international AFS award (article of this experience is given) could be spread/shared. (Silvia Gambino) - small partners should use their |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pass information to the host country about how they can choose and prepare the future host family - make use of the 'special' situation that there are more families than students to be placed - increasing the hosting numbers with those partners already exchanging students - looking for a more direct contact/communication between the hosting country (chapter) and the sending partner -> CHAPTER | <p>-Italian participant in Tunisia won an international AFS award (article of this experience is given) could be spread/shared. (Silvia Gambino)</p> <p>- small partners should use their familiar charm and their much more direct communication and counselling possibilities to convince sending partners / families that THERE people will be much more engaged and taking care much more personal about the exchange situation than in those partner countries where ONE student is just one among so many others.</p> <p>-Making use out of those participants returning to their original countries/chapters and make them to become a multiplier</p> <p>- Keeping in touch with former exchange students and agree on a following exchange between the sending and the hosting partner in order not to loose the positive experience on place.</p> <p>- Inviting students to information evenings, home interviews etc. so that they can talk in general to people interested in exchange about how far reality and stereotyped images are</p> |
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| | Handbook of 'How to spend a successful exchange year in Tunisia' | In progress |
| Missing information about the existing variety of hosting countries in the network / applicants have to be informed and maybe 'pushed' on exotic 'low-demand'-countries | Again, using existing, personal contacts, established in any kind of circumstances should be used to multiply information -> people generally promote those countries they have been or they have personal experience with | |
| Motivation | Flying Carpet-Award | In Germany there is an award given every year for the most innovative PR-campaign, so we could copy that idea and promote the 'Flying Carpet' for the most innovative campaign concerning exchange between Muslim and non-Muslim societies. |

Hosting students with a Muslim cultural background

| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
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| - Neglecting of certain countries for hosting (families) → Japan, Thailand, Turkey, China, Russia | - Information in gatherings by people (volunteers or natives) having made the experience- - Gatherings on local basis for exchanging ideas, gain families | |
| | - Using events for providing informational materials. | |
| Fast change of generation | - | |
| Misunderstanding, misinformation | - Developing new informational material, updating informational material on Muslim countries and on the Muslim cultural background. - Think about and prepare guidance for volunteers and families on practical topics. | Muslim students can spend lots of time in the bathroom. (e.g. for their prayers to wash themselves.) Fasting, eating customs, etc. |

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| | - Work together with sports clubs or other youth clubs and promote AFS\YFU. | |
| | - Pool of Experts (e.g. Families, volunteers, returnees) on topics like 'Islam', 'Muslim culture' or 'countries with Muslim cultural background' for information sessions, meetings etc. | |
| Sending a non Muslim to a country with Muslim cultural background | | |
| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
| - Students drinking alcohol in foreign countries. (Respecting both AFS rules and national laws) | - Forbidding alcohol by AFS rules and inform students about these rules. | |

Minorities

| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
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| <p>- the price can discourages economical disadvantaged families and students from applying</p> <p>-elitism (financial structure of organization)</p> | <p>1) alternative approach to financing</p> <p>- for instance, look at how other organizations sponsor their activities</p> <p>2) rephrasing : using alternative words avoids discouragement</p> | <p>1) Different possibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the cost of programs should not be country-based (everybody pays the same price) - the cost of programs should not be country-based (everybody pays according to his income) - the cost of the program depends on both the host country and income. (not recommended) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programs based on solidarity help their participants build sponsored projects : manuals with guidelines, networks to exchange and support fundraising practices, sponsorship circles (i.e. convincing family, friends, community to make a monthly contribution in exchange of a monthly report), etc <p>2)now it's "price" : it's better to use: cost, donation, required donation, contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - you don't "buy a program", you "participate in the program" (idea that participation can vary according to the means so that there is global redistributive equity in the system) |
| <p>- inclusion of all social classes</p> | <p>1) go present our organizations in different settings</p> <p>2) work on the public image</p> | <p>1) target schools in areas of lower income, speak in youth centers, religious community groups, social and community centers, sports clubs (for instance, ask each volunteer in the chapter to come up with 2 new settings in which to present the organization)...</p> <p>2) stress (in media, advertisements, participating in fairs, presentations, fundraising) the identity of our organizations as peace- building projects that can appeal to all social classes</p> |

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| | | presentations, fundraising) the identity of our organizations as peace- building projects that can appeal to all social classes rather than individual linguistic improvement which only appeals to the elite. |
| - Keeping volunteers in a broader sense | 1) keeping them busy 2) making him/her feel valuable within the organization 3) giving responsibilities | <p>Giving volunteers opportunities to do their own projects.</p> <p>YFU Estonia makes a tour for returnees and volunteers with a bus to schools around the country. It is a fun experience that bonds the volunteers together, and at the same time promotes exchange.</p> <p>Possibility to make community projects when they return.</p> |
| - Keeping volunteers with minority background | - Getting volunteers with minority background involved in community projects between their communities after they return. | <p>In AFS Turkey, the volunteers that come back from exchange do a community project, where they get students to shift schools for a week. (Jewish, Armenian, Greek and Turkish schools.) They do workshops about stereotypes and prejudices.</p> <p>Getting minority returnees to get involved in projects within their ethnic communities when they return, in order to promote their exchange organization.</p> |



Country Development

| Challenge | Solution/ action | Example/ Experience |
|---|---|------------------------|
| <p>-parents unwilling to send their Kids to countries with Muslim cultural background and Southeastasia.</p> <p>- students focused on anglophone countries</p> <p>- volunteers should adapt their attitude because perhaps with them trying to convince students.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Diversity of volunteers (returning from other countries) - toolbox and brochures for specific destinations such as Southeastasia - shared weekend orientations for the "hopees" so they can get into contact with hosted students - intercultural evening and presentation of countries from the hosted students - use of hosted students within their organization to bring out diversity. - hosted students can give presentations on their countries. - newspaper and newsletter with letters from hosted students and returnees, widely spread both, local and national level - short exchanges between two cities/chapters, more understanding - promote arabic language, since 240 million speak it, plus 50 million as second language. Useful for career and business. - countries where industry and economy is booming. - financial argument, cost of living very low so students don` t need a lot of pocket money. - internship and personal initiatives to go and spend some time in Asia and Africa "volunteers partnership" - scholarship based on countries to encourage students to go to more diverse countries. - using returnees as a proof of volunteers to promote their host countries at step of the selection/preparation process. - pool of contact details of returnees from different countries. - "specialist" hopees can contact if they have questions | |
| | <p>Shadow: younger volunteers with potential are selected to follow an experienced volunteer throughout an event – taking no responsibility, but trying out.</p> <p>Having a HR professional to make a development plan for the organisation → individual HR development plan for each volunteer.</p> | |



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| | <p>List up the motivation reasons: defining what competences you gain from doing different projects in the organization.</p> <p>Involve younger volunteers through social events shortly (1-2 weeks) after arriving to make the first contact, before the follow-up orientation.</p> <p>YFU Tour – the volunteers, who just came back to take part of a promotion tour, where they travel around the country and do class presentations about exchange.</p> <p>A former exchange student/volunteer: a successful, cool person to help recruit at the follow-up seminar.</p> | |
| <p>Lack of contact persons in new countries</p> <p>Lack of an organ within YFU which would deal with country development</p> | <p>Long term goal: Establishing YFU in Egypt. --></p> <p>Step 1., Having a study session/youth exchange (action 1) between representatives of NGO's from Egypt and YFU/EEE representatives. Maybe this could be funded with means from YIA (youth in action)/european youth foundation (we meet the conditions of application)</p> <p>Step 2., First exchanges could be done between volunteers and be short termed.</p> <p>Step 3., Short term exchange with students</p> <p>Step 4., Long term exchange</p> <p>Target: get YFU EEE to be the official organ of country development. Get EVS volunteers to work on country development in the YFU EEE office.</p> | |
| <p>How to put the Middle East on the agenda.</p> | <p>Think about the structure in your own national organisation: who makes the decisions and how? Find out who to go to. Lobbying: speak to board members, other volunteers, having training sessions and courses, having external speakers. Make people interested, make the subject or region attractive. Talk about diversity instead of just one specific country.</p> | |

