

PTPI's Leadership Seminar

"Beyond Borders"

Varna, Bulgaria

May 29-30, 2013

Workshop Results



*International
Peace through Understanding*

Aims:

- Enable active European PTPI chapter leaders to meet, get to know each other and **exchange experiences**;
- Introduce PTPI leaders to different **methods of informal learning and team work**, which they can use for their own projects, namely: Brainstorming Techniques, Peer Group Counseling;
- **Name concrete issues** or problems PTPI leaders are currently facing in their voluntary efforts and **find solutions as a team effort** using the method of Peer Group Counseling
- Work with PTPI leaders on topics of interest, for example membership recruitment and the International Visitors Program, or else as proposed by participants

Structure of the two-day program:

- Interactive exercises to get to know each other and break the ice
- Reflecting and categorizing expectations and practicing listening skills:
Based on the diverse expectations and categories found, participants formulated the following objectives for the seminar:
 - Leadership means: motivate / inspire, organize and delegate, communicate
 - Network
 - Enjoy
 - Explore and see
 - Share about PTPI
 - Create and develop projects
 - Acquire knowledge and skills
 - Share best practice
 - Communicate effectively
- Theater workshop to stage fears and worst-case scenarios for an international leadership seminar (reflecting about the question "what could go wrong?")
- Establishing a code of conduct (reflecting about "how can we avoid the worst-case scenarios?"):
 - Be honest and respectful
 - First strive to understand/listen, before you strive to be understood
 - Be open
 - Don't judge
 - Ask questions (to avoid misunderstandings)
 - Speak clearly
 - Don't disturb
 - Learn from the others
 - Celebrate difference
 - Be on time
 - Avoid offensive language and behavior
- Presentation and discussion of program
- Presentation and practice of methods helpful to further informal learning and team work:
 - Different brainstorming methods
 - Peer Group Counseling – a method of mutual support among peers to address and solve challenges
- Addressing problems and challenges as proposed by participants and finding solutions in small groups (by using the method of Peer Group Counseling)
Participants addressed the following problems and challenges (listed in the order of their priorities):
 - **Membership recruitment** (6)
 - **Finding time / balance between volunteering and other life priorities** (6)
 - **Transition from old to new chapter leaders** (3)
 - **Creating visibility** (3)
 - **Creating a positive image**
 - **Connect our message to what is important to people in our communities** (This topic was partly addressed by one of the workshops of interest, which a participant agreed to lead.)

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- **Community needs vs. personal interests**
- **Connecting and collaborating with non-EU countries** (challenging due to visa / funding)
- Planning projects

Participants prioritized the challenges found, connected similar items and decided on which issues to work further. They then formed small groups and used the method of Peer Group Counseling to find solutions for the problems and challenges. The results of those group efforts are included below.

- Workshops of interest (as determined previously in participants' applications as well as spontaneous additional workshops demanded and proposed during the seminar): the topics and results are included below.
- Evaluation of seminar

Task Forces to address problems and challenges encountered by participants

1. Finding time / balance between volunteering and other life priorities

Key question: What is important to your life?

Ideas for solution:

- Time management:
 - Realistic
 - Plan and write
- Share problem with others
- Make fun volunteering
- Delegate and share responsibility

2. Creating visibility and a positive image

Key question: How can we make our organization / projects / events visible? Methods?

Possible reasons behind the problem:

- Social media aren't used on time.
- TV or major media aren't interested in local events.
- No person was nominated to be in charge of PR.

Ideas for solution:

- Identify target group and find interesting projects for them.
- Organize meetings not only for members.
- Use public figures to advertise (involve VIPs in your projects).
- Create a newsletter and good descriptions of your goals.
- Form a PR team.
- Create a Webpage.
- Create popular events (festivals, ...).

3. Problem with transition from old to new chapter leaders

Key question: How do we build a strong connection between the current and former leaders?

Possible reasons behind the problem:

- Bad communication and lack of transition
- Not thinking as a group or as a team
- Different ideas and definitions of roles and goals

Ideas for solution:

- Establish a transition period.
- Organize teambuilding between former and current executive board.
- Create committees and include representatives from every committee in the executive board.
- Committees make suggestions, which need to be approved by the entire executive board.
- Create overlapping positions.

4. Community needs vs. personal interests

Key question: How do we ensure that what we do is of value to the people we are here to serve?

Ideas for solution:

1. Communication
 - Listen / talk with people from the community => "interpreter" needed
 - Find new unknown areas we have not explored so far
 - Increase our contacts => constant, permanent communication with people from the community

- ⇒ Partners
 - **Inform** people what you do => meet people; do chapter presentations and events
 - **Be more social** => attend not only one event, but as many as possible

2. Organization

- Assess our own resources, so we know how to adapt them effectively to the community's needs
- Specialization of work: ensuring people have specific roles – find out the “passions” of the volunteers / people

⇒ Organize well

- Find out our strengths, where we are and how to connect everyone
- Who is Who doing What
- Hierarchy ~ Guidance

5. Connecting and collaborating with countries that are not member of the European Union

Main problem: Non-EU countries don't have equal opportunities to participate in events (because of visa, high fares for travel, lack of experience in participation)

Key question: What can PTPI do to facilitate participation of non-EU countries? Do we have means to help?

Background of problem:

- This is actually a problem for all members. If the members from EU member states want to go to Russia, for instance, they also need visa. They also have to pay high fares for travelling. Visa and prices for travelling cannot be influenced by us, it is a political issue.

Ideas for solution:

- PTPI needs a policy to support countries and people who cannot afford high participation fees or travel costs: scholarships
- PTPI already issues invitation letters for special programs to facilitate visa application
- Collect possibilities: get in contact with many chapters and also start exchange within region
- Organize own events (on local level and/or invite members from abroad)

Feedback from problem-presenter: (Which suggestions are most useful?)

- Visa invitations issued by the chapters where you want to have a Homestay with (Lars already helped a lot.)
- Scholarships and possibilities to participate: if one member can participate, he/she can multiply members in his/her country.
- It is great that each country and chapter can organize events – the multiplying effect can help to get more members

6. Membership recruitment

Key questions: How can we find new members? How can we keep members in the chapter? (Gain and retain)

Ideas for solution:

- Make sure to integrate new members among the existing members as soon as possible
- Address same age groups
- Use extra funds for recruitment efforts
- Try to create something catchy to advertise
- Use your popular members
- Show your attractive activities and programs such as:
 - Youth in Action Projects and funding through EU
 - International atmosphere and travel opportunities
 - Motivation to develop personal skills and connections

Workshops of Interest

1. Membership Recruitment – led by Lars Poignant

The workshop was held in an interactive manner sharing experiences from all participants, who represented all three types of chapters. The background and challenges facing the chapters were quite different. From own lessons learned and recruitment experiences of other NGOs the following items were discussed:

- Why do members volunteer?

- What are the benefits of PTPI membership?
- What are your chapter programs? – Make sure to show them to the existing and new members
- Start a recruitment campaign; time (six months) – goal (10-100? new members) – media (ads/schools) – activities (good atmosphere events/parties) – committee
- How does the chapter membership structure look like? age – profession – interests
- Make sure to keep existing members!
- Ask/encourage the existing members to *bring a friend*.
- Media
 - Newspaper
 - Website
 - Flyers
- Use the PTPI Recruitment material!

2. Getting a Message Across (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) – led by Chalks Corriette

Main points and recommendations:

- Giving away a positive message rather than a negative one to get to the person. Example: Wrong: Don't forget you keys. Right: Remember your keys.
- Overcoming hurdles in projects and in life by dividing complexity into small parts
- Controlling our emotions by limiting our anger and avoiding words like “can't, don't, won't, might,” or “try”.
- How to better reach people by analyzing, how they receive information the best (visual, sound or feeling) and by presenting it that way

3. Preparing Questions for the World Café of the European Conference – led by Verena Denk

Several participants had important questions related to PTPI or international understanding in general, which we decided to ask during the World Café of the European Conference in order to get input from all countries, chapters and age groups represented.

The participants in this workshop of interest volunteered as table hosts at the World Café. Since more table hosts were needed, additional volunteers not present at the leadership seminar also supported the World Café. The following questions were prepared and then discussed during the World Café:

- “How can we help chapters to raise funds, so they can send at least one representative to major PTPI events?” Table host: Valeria Magistrelli (PTPI's Milano, Italy Chapter)
- “What needs to happen, so people from different countries and cultures can truly understand each other?” Table host: Ruta Pels (PTPI's Tallinn, Estonia Chapter)
- “How can we improve exchanges between PTPI chapters in different countries?” Table host: Janusz Wozniak (PTPI's Katowice, Poland Student Chapter)
- “Why are you happy as a PTPI member or how can you be happy?” Table host: Kaloyan Stoyanov (PTPI's Varna, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “How does PTPI change you as a person?” Table host: Yoana Marchovska (PTPI's Pravets, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “What is the main reason for a person to join PTPI?” Table host: Anita Banova (PTPI's Pravets, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “What's your best experience in a foreign country?” Table host: Iveta Bachvarova (PTPI's Varna, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “How does PTPI change the community that you live in?” Table host: Antoaneta Pophlebarova (PTPI's Varna, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “What was the best experience you had with PTPI?” Table host: Elena Hristova (PTPI's Varna, Bulgaria Student Chapter)
- “How can we promote PTPI on the local level?” Table host: Anna Marie Bohsen (People to People Denmark)
- “Which program/activity within PTPI attracts you most and why?” Table host: Gunild Bogdan (People to People Denmark)
- “Which elements should always be present for the activities organized for and by PTPI?” Table host: Ruth Allen (PTPI's Great Phoenix, Arizona Chapter, USA)