

Summary of evaluation of the CF Study Trip 2014

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The participants of the CF Study Trip on their last day of the trip looked back at the week and discussed in small groups what worked well, what could be improved for the future, what surprised them and also their feedback to the web-site www.cfpracticelab.org.

Summary of this feedback is below and is based on what was captured from the flipcharts from different small groups. There is no interpretation to it, everyone can make his or her interpretation as far the overall view on the Study Trip 2014 after reading this document 😊.

I. WHAT WORKED WELL?

Group dynamics

- Almost the same composition of the group so we could continue some discussions

Logistics and Organization

- Good logistics
- Organization and structure of the study trip
- Documents in folders
- Perfect organizing

Process

- Openness of people, responsiveness
- We have got good and very tangible taste of community life
- There was time for emotional insights, not just learning
- Evening debriefing
- Splitting group for 3 days allowed us to spend more time together and learn more about us
- Splitting the groups with a main theme to focus on, Excellent themes
- Themes worked well as a basis for reflection
- Meeting mixed groups (board, staff, volunteers, etc) in host communities and in different settings
- Balanced agenda (2 units different and taken at different times each day)
- Mixture in type of visited CFs
- Visit met expectations, similar CFs and there were many common issues

Learning

- Deep, intellectual discussion, growth of people's understandings of various issues
- Good occasion to compare various CFs in various countries
- Balance of theoretical and practical knowledge
- We were able to connect our practice to their practice
- Reflections –locally and in large group – were deep/meaningful
- Exceeded expectations in terms of ideas and perspectives

- Learned new things
- Good space to compare, hear the more experienced, good experience

Specific

- Public event in BB targeting sensitive issue
- New connections
- Combination with the conference permitted more people to come
- Helpful for all Slovak CFs
- Support of companies in Nitra
- Donor from CF Liptov inspiring

II. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE DIFFERENTLY, WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED?

Learning

- More space to reflect, give feedback to the host CFs
- More space for critical conversations
- More cultural context!
- More of challenges discussed, future plans
- More explicit reflection sessions during visits
- Better understanding of our role, space for discussion, much (too much) information in short time, not enough space for reflection
- Themes could have been more focused
- CFs should shorten their presentations, more facts on paper
- Reflection papers - how to become continuous, how to comment (volume, detail, etc)

Process

- Very dense, many impressions, long days,
- Too busy agenda
- Skip lunches, too much food, save money, meet instead over tea and coffee
- Warm up games, ice-breakers were missing
- There was not enough time for Q&A, discussion
- Though important there were too many visits to grantees, save time for discussion with CF staff
- Staff from host country to travel with each group (at least 1 group didn't have a Slovak)
- Wish to engage with more people who can discuss the community, rather than only focus on CF
- Not enough time in site visits, but don't want to visit more communities
- Make more private time for more sensitive questions
- Would like space to discuss what next
- Some downtime to make sense of inputs
- Would like more information on results and some effort to connect experiences of one site visit to another (what happened in between)
- More people could write reflections

Logistics

- too much food...but all were still curious
- Conference should have had translator
- Agency was not needed
- Closed rooms without light are depressing

III. WHAT WERE THE SURPRISES?

- New views on strengths and weaknesses of host CFst (among those who already new them)
- Saw less engagement of local donors than expected
- Website
- Visibility (very tangible) of CF results in Bardejov
- Seemingly limited links between Slovak CFs and local government
- Survey was great!
- Big role of 2%
- Quality of the leaders (passion and dedication)
- Beauty of the small places, special fabric, human contacts
- Twinning with Tanzania –BB
- Lacking the message “there is hope for more philanthropy in Slovakia”
- Appearance of the cities – infrastructure, colors fresh, calm, quiet, no tension

IV. FEEDBACK TO THE WEBSITE

- Technical problems
- Registration process difficult, confusing
- The same materials in the package and on the website (unclear info about whether to print resulted in double printing)
- Launched very late
- Add photos and films
- Could have been more actively promoted
- Question to consider expanding use of website to other users?
- Check demand side before further investment
- Include information on other events/learning opportunities
- Make access to info/resources more user friendly
- Useful to have historical materials
- Make it more interactive!
- Establish a forum!?

V. FINAL REMARKS

- The visit created challenging discussion among Slovak CFs
- Many thanks to organizers!
- Some inspirations and ideas will be implemented in my CF
- The concept is based on intellectual discussions