



How to fill the pre-departure action plan

The Professional Exchange Programs are long-term engagement. It doesn't end with your single visit to United States of America. The whole visit is based on the method "Community Organizing", which is used by many non-governmental organizations in America to resolve concrete issue. Before you apply, please get acquainted with the method and what American's organizations are using for.

<http://glc-teachdemocracy2.org/books-toolkits-on-co/>

Who can apply:

The Professional Fellowship Exchange programs of WSOS/GLC are for applicants who are already working in the civil sector. Program coordinators, assistants, facilitators, youth workers, trainers etc., who are having experience in implementing activities, actions and programs together with minority groups. During the application process the applicant should be working or volunteering in non-governmental organization. The applicants should be in the age 25-40, with small exceptions and approval from the U.S. State Department.

INTERNSHIP

The applicants should have in mind that the place of the internship which is 4 weeks will be depending on the filled information in the application form. The manager of the program will do its best to match the applicants experience and activities with the activities and the practices of the American host organization. According to your target group and your experience, which you have up to now, the host organizations will elaborate a one-month plan for your internship. You'll take part directly in their activities, which includes: volunteerism, participation in campaigns, participation in some direct action (incl. rally or other type of demonstration) of course in a safe non-violent way, meetings with other organizations etc. During your internship you'll be placed in host families, who voluntarily will open their homes for you. Outside your internship you'll be accommodated in 3*/4* hotels in double rooms. The host organization is selected based on specific application form designed for American organizations. Respectively not all organizations are coming from big cities/states. Have in mind that you might be located in a smaller place with not so well developed public transportation, but if so you'll be either able to have a bicycle or the organizers or host families will assist you with the transportation.

HOW TO FILL THE PRE-DEPARTURE ACTION PLAN

Have in mind that when an applicant is selected, she/he must implement a pre-departure action plan to demonstrate experience in the field using community organizing tools in minority communities to help them to identify and solve some of their issues. Filling out the form of the pre-departure action plan takes no more than 20 min and the idea behind it is to give the applicant practical experience in community organizing. The implementation will be discussed amongst the participants from the 4 countries in America as well as your host organizations and mentors. The pre-departure action plan consists of several parts where the biggest part is information that the application needs to put numbers and estimated deadlines.

- 1.** In no more than 3-4 sentences describe your target group, which you're or you'll be working with. Describe the main issues that you think the target group is facing. Name the locality of the community having in mind that the community should be near by the applicant's current place of living i.e. if a candidate lives in the capital, but would like to work with a target group in 500 km away – that won't be effective!
- 1 a}** We are talking about Community organizing and therefore we ask the applicant to have followers/supporters. Please list one or more people who you think are interested in what you are doing. Respectfully while you are in America she/he should have regular visits and meetings with the target group to continue working with the people what you have started.
- 2** The Community Organizing method is based on building power in the people and empowerment of people. They are the power, which will change the status quo or solve concrete problem and bring change. To start community organizing is necessary to listen to the people who are affected by the issues directly, and hold as much meetings and conversation as possible with the target group by using the "Door knocking" and "One on One" techniques of Community Organizing method. You'll be hearing a lot those two terms in America. They are fundamental and extremely important. In this part you are asked to estimate the number the people with whom you would talk about their problems by using door knocking (take time up to 10 minutes) and make appointment for longer conversation "One on One". Each "interview" should take about 30 minutes each.
- 3** Here we are clearly talking about the method "One on One". At the beginning you need to do such 'interviews' with at least 10-20 people from the target group. Your chance to form a group of people (a core active group) will increase if you reach out to many people and to build some relationship with them so you know their self-interest and what are the issues that they are concerned about and willing to work out collaboratively. This core group should be your supporters and together jointly to organize a bigger meeting where bigger number of people should attend. Here you need to give the number of people with whom you would meeting and talk using One on One technique and the meeting shouldn't be less than 30 min with single person.

4a) Once you've met with the target group and you have done "one on ones", you need to identify group of potential leaders, with whom you should meet separately and plan your first big meeting with the community (bigger number of people). You should include these leaders in selecting the place for holding your big meeting, in disseminating the information about the event, as well as in inviting as many people as possible. Here you need to give the number of potential leaders, who you'll get as your supporters and plan the big event. Have at least 2 hours meeting with these leaders.

4b) Here you need to give the number of people (approximately) who will participate in this big community meeting in which you would talk about the problems they are facing.

4c) At this meeting let the community to choose the 3 problems which they would like to tackle with your support. Let them think about these problems and ask about solutions. Here you need to give a date for the 2nd big meeting.

5 Here it is needed to develop an action plan for at least one of the problems mentioned and chosen by the community during the 1st big meeting. Give the timeframe when this will happen.

6 Here it comes the action on at least one of the problem chosen during the 1st big meeting. Give a date when this will happen.

Don't forget to keep records as you'll be asking to send us interim and final reports attaching pictures from all the steps. Please remember taking good quality photos that you can attach to your report for documentation and also important later when you will share your success stories.

When to start your pre-departure field work?

After your first training in community organizing, the sooner you start using these organizing tools in working with a minority community, you have a better chance to understand whether or not this is something that is your interest and willing to put more time in to make a difference in people's life in disadvantaged communities. As part of the selection process during the interviews with interested applicants an important question is the applicant interest and experience in using community organizing methods in minority communities, to make sure only those people will be selected for the Spring or Fall trip to the U.S. who are not only prepared to use the same tools in minority communities in the U.S. but also to show others how community organizing can work in Europe, and also ask practical questions to improve the organizing skills and have more results.

Since the selection is a competitive process in 4 countries, there is no guarantee that everyone who have practical organizing experience from the field can be selected, but those who has no experience will not be competitive in this process. Without some investment in training and practical community organizing fieldwork you cannot be recommended for selection.