

# Results: International Youth Leadership Program, Retreat Pathway: “Three Key Teambuilding Tools”

**Sample Group:** Ten energetic, young adult leaders from Argentina, Kenya, Moldova, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam gathered for a ten-week, cross-country U.S. tour, visiting schools and community organizations, with a programmatic focus on spiritual and ethical development, leadership skills, cross cultural awareness and social responsibility.

**Challenge:** (1) Clarify why we are here and what we bring to the team; (2) Practice basic dialogue skills as first step to teach others; (3) Surface vision and mission to realize shared aims; (4) Deepen group identity and capacity for creative collaboration; (5) Gain practice with basic tools the leaders can use to conduct “community conversations.”

**Activities Played:** Clarity of Intention; Distinctive Energies; Moving Together As One; Four Energies; Reflective Listening; Appreciating One Another.

**Summary Results:** Select activities from the SEED Game were facilitated to build a solid foundation for the group to function as a “we” and at the same time to equip team members for leadership roles fostering dialogue, deep connection, shared understanding and celebration in communities visited. Working extremely well together across language and cultural differences, the participants grasped new concepts quickly, demonstrated openness to gain new insights, eagerness for more hands-on coaching, and continuous enthusiasm about being together and learning from each other.

*People:* One member summarized personal results: “SEED helped us get out of our little worlds and truly look at each other with new eyes, as if we see each other for the first time, celebrating our uniqueness.”

*Process:* “Every exercise has multiple levels of application from personal to communal...” remarked one participant in describing the “structure” for personal, group and community work delivered in these sessions. Participants clearly enjoyed learning by practicing. As one explained: “It has been helpful to immediately put what you teach us into practice, so the practices can become ingrained, serve us throughout our trip, and help us teach others.” “SEED helped us realize we all have our different skills and talents ... and to practice using them together.”

*Product:* The group ended its 1.5 day session expressing gratitude for being “equipped,” with direction and skills to enrich their team, share their message and grow in their capacity to understand new perspectives. They were especially appreciative for the opportunity to learn by practicing in a safe space where they felt free to experiment and explore how they will assist community formation with other groups. As one articulated: “SEED has helped me with some very important tools in communication and team-building as a member of this group. More importantly, it helped us build the spirit in our group and discover ourselves as a group more effectively in the world.”

## What new insights were gained?

- I’ve led discussion groups in various settings and haven’t found it easy to deal with one person who makes many points at once. “Just make one point at a time” is something I’ll take with me.
- Yes, absolutely! I’ll use that throughout my whole life.
- The “one point” rule will increase clarity of intent in our words and thoughts.
- I found the concept of Checking-In important; it includes everybody—everybody should be heard.
- Listening... is imperative to producing change. The reflective listening was also helpful.
- The deepening activity is very helpful to find what’s in the group and the distinctiveness, so we can value what each one brings, and rise together in a common voice.
- We are learning about each other.
- You told us there is no wrong answer, so everyone feels that what he/she says is very important.
- The concept of “listening for the whole” made me/us know that each person counts and if one person is missing, then the group is incomplete.

### **How well do I feel we worked together on these activities?**

- Very good.
- Judging from our attitudes now that we are fully participating, I felt good about it.
- These are instruments that we can use in daily life and in different communities, just as we have practiced here.
- The germ/seed of the way we've started working together today is really exciting because if we can solidify some of the magic moments into practice, into routine, in our bones, we will be operating a community of dialogue unlike any other I have experienced.
- I was struck by everybody being involved and not only involved but willing to take leadership. That has been really quite striking.
- The free, non-judgmental environment and encouragement is very helpful.
- I appreciated the selflessness of the facilitators to want to help other NGO's as partners in changing the world.
- We are thinking of people as a group now. Suddenly I realize I am thinking like I am myself more people, more hearts, more brains, and that's why I find others in the same path with the same address in this world.

### **What did these activities teach me? In what ways am I improving as I participate in the group?**

- I'm wrestling with my own desire to jump in to take leadership, and with leaving free space for others to step in and take leadership... I hope I'm growing. That's a tension or a muscle I'm working on ...
- I'm becoming more trusting. It's in the microcosm of this group, and getting to experience the reward that comes from listening and staying open minded and being patient, I am living fully in the community.
- I was struck by what was said about living up to expectations ... not to have expectations that increase his burden; not to be a burden; I shall be much more sensitive to that going on in him.
- Generally I did not only receive or perceive information, but I can try it out right here, and I'm doing it. I'm getting to practice it to learn it, and without being afraid of making a mistake...
- I'm being myself with no pressure. I feel fully accepted by everyone here.
- I feel I can say anything because you say there's no wrong answer. Sometimes I'm afraid to say things because it could be the wrong thing.
- I realize I can't hear very well. It's not that I don't listen but I have a problem hearing. Maybe that's why I speak loud. Some people speak fast and don't remember I don't speak the native language.
- It is helpful to be encouraged and to see the potential we have together.
- I look forward to testing this game and using it in various situations. It has given us a good tool to use as we build our group and do what we set out to do. I have also been looking for ways to continue growing an[other] organization... this game may be it!

### **Do I sense we are making significant forward progress and if so, in what areas?**

- We're beginning to place ourselves in the frame of a group on the road facing issues ... The plan is becoming more concrete in our own visions and in our head.
- We are more aware of our roles in the program.
- By being aware and having more clarification it's easier to go on and to work more as a team and to express yourself more freely and to have the courage to go for this vision that we have set today.
- We're not just learning new skills and perspectives but envisioning how those skills and perspectives, when put into practice, will themselves be a force of change.
- The work in teams... clarified a shared vision. I see a better sense of direction than three days ago.
- I keep going back to the list at the beginning of the day, our skills, talents, hobbies... That's progress being able to put down and share our strengths and see which ones overlap. It also makes us see how our weaknesses can be compensated with other people's strengths.
- Yeah, it's a positive thing to see and know values, skills and not defects and mistakes of the other person. Those will appear, but this is to visualize the positive and build on it.
- This time was incredibly formative for us.
- We have a great readiness to learn from you and each other.
- The possibilities for personal growth, as well as what we give are huge.