

Evaluation and Documentation

The trip may be over once the travelers have returned home, but the "Experiencing Turkey" project is not.

The participants arrive at home full of new impressions. They need to process the exciting, enjoyable, funny, moving and happy experiences they had on their trip, but also the frustrating and depressing ones. They might have had difficult encounters with people or have had complex experiences that were hard to understand. Misunderstandings – even if at the time it was easy to laugh about them – as well as conflicts between groups or individuals or with host families can be occasion for reflection and learning.

This is why we are not satisfied with a trip report that consists only of a list of daily activities or snapshots of tourist highlights. We don't need you to prove to us that the trip (or Turkey) was "nice." The report is not the price the Foundation demands in exchange for sponsorship, but an important part of the "Experiencing Turkey" project. If the participants journal about their experiences, it should not be "for the Foundation" but because they want to.

We would like an evaluation and documentation that works through the experiences of the participants and represents these experiences in an appropriate way. This means that the whole range of experiences, the surprises, the joy and the frustration are all covered, and that there is an analysis of what worked well and what was more difficult. In the case of difficulties, it is most helpful to concentrate on one's own struggles and to be careful not to let difficult circumstances (such as bad organization, weather, etc.) take center stage and block out other issues. It is also a good idea to include the impressions and voices of the group's Turkish partners and exchange materials (photos, writings, etc.) with them.

The evaluation and documentation serve in the first place to affirm the experiences of the travelers. It is just as important for us, however, that these experiences are made public and available to others – and certainly within the organization or institution to which the group belongs. But we would also like the reports to inspire a broader public to think about this kind of intercultural exchange and for others to decide to take a trip like this themselves or support someone else's trip.

Here is one way to go about putting together this kind of evaluation:

a) While on the trip, the young people and adults collect material (diaries, notes, stories, photographs, films, drawings, pressed flowers or leaves, recipes, rocks, sea shells, etc.) based on considerations, topics and questions decided upon together beforehand.

b) During the relaxation part of the trip, the group looks through this raw material, checks it for completeness and discusses what they will do with it once they have returned home.

c) At home and, if possible, once some time has passed, the group takes out the material again, reflects on it, and gives it its final shape. This could be a brochure with images and texts, a PowerPoint presentation, a film, a newspaper, a collection of stories, collages, an exhibition, a radio play, an article on a website (that could be linked to ours) and so forth.

The *Er-Fahren working group* must be provided with

1. Immediately after the trip:

a brief report from the perspective of the group leaders about how the trip went, including problems encountered and discoveries made. The report should give us as well as the group an indication of the work still ahead. It should also include how the group has decided to evaluate and document the trip.

2. Once the group has completed its evaluation, and no later than the end of the calendar year:

the final documentation as well as a report explaining to whom and in what form it was made available.