



Cultural Detective Business Case

People to People International: Global Youth Forum

November 2011

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Overview of Client:

Headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, People to People International (PTPI) is a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organization, operational since 1956. It has a presence in 135 countries with more than 80,000 families and individuals participating in its programs for students and adults. Its website states, “PTPI is dedicated to enhancing cross-cultural communication within and across communities and nations. Tolerance and mutual understanding are central themes. While not a partisan or political institution, PTPI supports the basic values and goals of its founder, President Dwight D. Eisenhower.”

People to People International’s purpose is to enhance international understanding and friendship through educational, cultural and humanitarian activities involving the exchange of ideas and experiences directly among peoples of different countries and diverse cultures.



Opportunity/Needs:

Sarah Houston, Managing Director of Student Programs, contracted *Cultural Detective* to develop the student curriculum for PTPI’s 2011 Global Youth Forum, which would have the theme of “Cultural Understanding: Discover what a small world it really is.” Approximately 12-14 hours of curriculum, which would deliver on the conference theme, would need to be developed. The student population of about 130 students would include



a mix of both middle school and high school students – the majority from around the USA and about 10% of the population from 14 countries around the world. The curriculum would be taught to the students by volunteer adult leaders, who would also need to be trained prior to the conference. However, there would only be a couple of hours available to train these leaders live.

Cultural Detective Solution:

The *Cultural Detective* Team designed a student curriculum that would be fun and engage the students with some critical thinking and group activities. We followed a theme of traveling to destinations, using passport stamps to leave one destination and enter the next on the students' intercultural development journeys. Objectives of the curriculum focused on:

- Demonstrating that common sense is cultural and that as a cultural group we have a general set of core values through which we as a group can be recognized
- Recognizing our individual core values and that our values are reflected through our behavior
- Refraining from judgment while interacting with others and to search for explanations about another's beliefs underlying their behavior
- Having the ability to work across cultures and different value systems is a key skill in daily life and one that will become increasingly important as one continues on life's journey.

Students divided into groups of about 8-10 to become familiar with their own core values, those of other cultural groups and of their team members through several values exploration activities taken from the *Cultural Detective Self Discovery* package. They worked with the *Cultural Detective* Method using one of three video-based critical incidents from the movie, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." Then they prepared a presentation for the large group of 130 students. Presentations were to focus on creatively sharing the insights they gained through their "destination travels," and demonstrate how they could continue to build bridges once back home in their social groups, schools and communities.



Cultural Detective Benefits and/or Measurable Results:

When asked whether the volunteer teaching staff felt students connected with and learned from the curriculum some of the responses were:

“The students learned not only how to understand others’ cultures but their own. Student's demonstrated a tremendous amount of growth in just a couple days!”

“Yes, I feel they were able to achieve the goals of the curriculum. I think they gained the most from realizing the different perspectives people have because of the various cultures that have impacted who they are.”

“Yes. They worked as team members to understand more about who they are; the value of exploring other people's values and discovering ways of making valuable connections with others.”

“Yes, I feel the students understand that their values are unique and their actions reflect their values. I think they also understood that every person has a different set of values that motivate their actions.”

“The students enjoyed the topic and connected with the materials. I think they learned a great deal by digging in to themselves and others. When I first read the lessons I thought they were simple and did not appreciate how deeply you could delve into the destinations. I felt like I was peeling an onion and finally got to the sweet heart of it. I learned a lot, too!”

“I believe the students achieved the desired learning, the key learning being an understanding of culture and the impact culture plays on how one relates to others.”



Client Testimonials:

The students also voluntarily shared their opinions with us through video. Click on the screenshot below to view the video:



Or view it through this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jReCxfrGYnE>