Special Olympics Leadership Academy held a Leader III workshop for leaders from Latin and Central America in Cusco, Peru, on June 17-20, 2019. Leader III focuses on growing Programs’ sustainability and uses blended learning to provide continuous support to leaders over the course of one year. The Academy is a leadership development program aimed at engaging and inspiring emerging leaders to become brave, visionary, dynamic leaders that drive the development and growth of Special Olympics in their country or state.

The participating leaders, who had formed a close collaborative network in the course of the previous two Academies, gathered together to think through a challenging topic of non-profit sustainability. Gerardo Gonzales, Board Chair of Lions Clubs Peru, launched the workshop by sharing impressive results of fruitful partnership between Lions and Special Olympics.

Kurt Holle, CEO of WWF Peru, shared his organization best sustainability practices on the last day of the workshop. In an interview format, he emphasized the importance of having a strategy, thinking long-term, finding creative solutions in achieving financial sustainability and building collaborative teams that are capacitated to execute the vision of the strong leaders.

The success of the workshop was made possible thanks to the contributions of the external pro-bono experts:

- Gustavo Arellano, FIBA Marketing, Senior Sponsorship Account Manager (Switzerland)
- Javier Llerena, Re-Invent Coaching, Co-Founder (USA)
- Marcial Rapela, Bain, Director (Chile)
- Jose Luiz Zarate, True Roots International (Mexico)

It was one of the best workshops I have ever participated in in my professional life.

Ana Paula Soares, SO Brazil

Thank you very much for the excellent Academy you have organized for us. Without a doubt, it has been a great contribution to our personal and professional development.

Carolina Picasso, SO Chile
Leader III module utilizes blended learning. The participants attended 3 webinars before the workshop to learn the key concepts about sustainability which they applied in practice using action learning during their time together in-person.

During the workshop, the leaders spent the majority of time in small self-selected groups designing sustainability projects with the support from the coaches.

The Leader III workshop focused on the following:
1. Development of a sustainability strategy
2. NGO sustainability essentials: definition and framework
3. Essentials of strategy development

In the Ideation Lab on Day 1, the participants brainstormed ideas for sustainability. Then the leaders designed projects, which they will be implementing in their Programs over one year.

As part of the post-workshop follow-up, each leader receives six pro bono coaching hours thanks to a new partnership with the ICF Foundation.

6 diverse sustainability projects were developed during the workshop, ranging from digital fundraising and marketing strategy to impact analysis and internal processes improvements. Once implemented, those projects will lead to measurable sustainability of SO Programs in the Region.

As part of the skills development sessions, the leaders learned from the industry experts about strategy development, designing successful sponsorship strategy and giving powerful presentations.

On the final day of the workshop, project teams shared the work they accomplished in the course of the workshop in a friendly competition.

Participants completed evaluation forms to provide feedback on the workshop and to rate their skills, conviction, understanding, and positive gains. All participants without an exception were satisfied with the new methodology, delivery and content. The majority of the participants commented that it was the best of the 3 modules they attended.

The average overall satisfaction rate by the participants was 5 out of 5.

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