



Global Village Reflection Meetings Guide

In-country meetings inspire action and make the trip matter

When our Global Village volunteers return home from helping a family in need, they always have the same report: "I got back more than I gave."

Habitat for Humanity depends on our team leaders to help volunteers connect dots – from the Global Village trip to life back at home, and from the host community to a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Reflection meetings are the best tools to ensure you have a meaningful Global Village trip. The discussions strengthen

bonds among your team members, deepen the team's understanding of the local community and the conditions of their shelter, and catalyze volunteers to continue serving at home.

Below is a discussion framework that works well for Global Village teams, but feel free to customize it. You can get ideas from the sample questions below, and discuss at a pace that suits your team.

Meeting 1: Share expectations

At the trip's beginning, gather everyone for a meeting before the build and ask, "What is one expectation you have for this trip?" Invite each person to share. The question prompts your volunteers to consider what they want to take from the experience, and it's a great team builder. You'll be surprised by the range of answers.

Meeting 2: Observe

After your first day in the community, share first impressions. Invite the group to observe and not rush to figure out what it all means. You've got plenty of time to get there together. Offer simple questions such as, "How were we greeted?" and "What community resources did you see?" As with the first night, see if you can invite everyone to speak at least once.

Sample questions:

- What did you see in the community?
- How did the community greet us?
- What were their houses like?
- What are their community resources?
- What are the key points you noted during the Habitat orientation?
- On the work site, when did you most feel you were part of the team?
- How did community members, construction workers or the homeowner act on the work site?

Meeting 3: Reflect

Now that your group is connecting, guide them into sharing their personal reflections. Focus on the community members ("In what ways do you feel similar to the people we're meeting? In what ways do you feel very different?"), the build ("In what ways did we work well together as a team?"), or individual experience ("In what ways does this community remind you of yours at home?"). These more personal questions may stretch across several meetings; let your group dynamics determine the flow.

Sample questions:

- How do you feel in the community?
- In what ways do you feel similar to the homeowner?
- In what ways do you feel very different from the homeowner?
- How might you feel about yourself if you lived here?
- In what ways does this community remind you of yours at home?
- What part of the day made you feel most inspired? What frustrated you most?
- What was one thing that you did that made you feel more effective?
- In what ways did we work well together as a team?
- How can we work better as a team tomorrow?
- What did you think about while on the work site today?

Meeting 4: Interpret

Lead the group to higher-level questions that draw connections between the community's situation, Habitat's interventions, and the conditions that sustain poverty. Questions such as, "What choices does the homeowner have? What choices do they not have?" should get your team thinking. Invite them to imagine, "What would make this community a better place to live?" Consider the differences between this trip and your home life with a question such as, "After this week, how do you define 'community'?" Let people wrestle with these difficult questions. We want volunteers to consider that poverty may look different everywhere, but you can always help improve people's lives.

Sample questions:

- What support does the homeowner have?
- What does the homeowner seem to value?
- What choices does the homeowner have? What choices do they not have?
- What difference do you think our work with Habitat is making for this family?
- What would make this community a better place to live?
- What do a person's living conditions say about them? What do your living conditions say about you?
- What questions does this trip raise for you?
- Do you wish your community at home resembled this community in any way? How?
- What has helped our team forge community?
- After this week, how do you define "community"?
- How has this experience been meaningful to you?

Meeting 5: Decide

As the trip comes to a close, help your volunteers consider how they'll channel their energy back at home. Ask, "In addition to this trip, how have you served people experiencing poverty?" Pinpoint the differences between the trip and home by asking, "Where you live, who has trouble affording housing?" Depending on the group's interest, you might ask a broad question, such as, "Will you do anything differently when you're home?" or one more narrow, "What will we commit to do as a group to continue improving this community?"

Sample questions:

- In addition to this trip, how have you served people experiencing poverty?
- What can you do at home to honor the people we served here?
- Will you do anything differently when you're home?
- Where you live, who has trouble affording housing?
- What would improve housing conditions in your community?
- How can you serve people at home in a way that makes a lasting difference in their lives?
- What's your next step? Whom will you contact to get started?
- What are we committed to doing as a group?

We intentionally end with decisions. At some point, each of your volunteers made the big decision to join this Global Village team. We hope that they make another decision after the trip: to continue volunteering and serving. After all, poverty isn't just a problem in the community where you're building; it is also a problem at home. Your team will continue these conversations as you begin sharing photos.

Thank you for leading your volunteers. You'll see your Global Village team create a change in a community and experience a change in themselves. It's powerful work, and Habitat for Humanity is proud to be part of it with you.

