

Friends Society
MISSION, PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGY

(5 Aug 2018)

Here are key statements (Mission and Principles) and Strategy (road map) that will guide us in our efforts to make FS stronger as we approach the 50th anniversary. They are developed by a small team of FS members. Please review and send you comments and suggestions to Niranjana (nirudave@aol.com) before 31st August 2018.

OUR MISSION

What we are all about, our reason for existence

Help young volunteers realize self-development through participation in activities for providing service to the people in need.

Explanation for FS members: FS was started in 1969 to provide opportunities to the university students to engage in productive activities and realize self-development while doing so. The activities chosen were for providing service to the people in Vadodara who need it. “Service” or “Self-development” - which comes first is a moot point, both are interrelated and actually are like two sides of the same coin.

PRINCIPLES

Guidelines for how we do things, core values we do not deviate from

1. Believe in each person's potential to achieve better things

Explanation for FS members: We should help both volunteers and beneficiaries grow and reach higher levels, and believing in their potential to do so is necessary for achieving that. Everyone at FS should believe that each person can reach greater heights from where they currently are. We believe that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness and that disability does not mean absence of ability.

2. Members realize self-development through service provided

Explanation for FS members: "Self-development through service" has been our motto from the beginning of FS. (See a box at the end of this document that describes various components of self-development).

At FS, we bring youth closer to less privileged sectors of society and realize integration of youth and society. Young people can make difference in the lives of people, and while serving them, the volunteers come to realize that they are really uplifting themselves.

FS provides a platform for actions and growth. This platform is based on the beliefs of team building and building from what you have. By directing energy of youth for constructive work, FS helps develop better future citizens. FS is a stepping stone for future leaders.

Commitment and being responsible are the traits that FS helps develop by insisting that it is voluntary at the time of making a commitment, but once a commitment is made, that commitment is expected to be kept.

3. As custodians of other people's money, we spend it judiciously

Explanation for FS members: Everyone at FS has a responsibility for spending money wisely and are held accountable for doing that. Volunteers are involved in fund-raising efforts so they can better appreciate the value of money and responsibly become the custodian of money; we value small and large contributions; we believe that big is blessing but small is beautiful.

4. Treat each other with respect

Explanation for FS members: This is a cardinal principle that must be followed at all times. We believe that beneficiaries are our friends and we treat them accordingly; we believe in, "Help me grow, don't pity me." Respect for all is shown by treating everyone equally as a valuable person and no one is considered indispensable.

5. Safety and well-being of the people we serve through our activities are important

Explanation for FS members: We ensure safety and well-being of all the beneficiaries while they are participating in FS activities or are at the FS campus.

6. Safety and well-being of volunteers participating in our activities are important

Explanation for FS members: We strive to ensure physical, emotional and mental well-being of volunteers and ensure that no harm occurs to them. We want their parents to be able to trust FS when they send their daughters and sons to FS activities. We insist that studies and family come first, before FS.

7. Avoid duplication of activities carried out by other organizations

Explanation for FS members: FS is not in competition with other service organizations and we do not duplicate the services they provide. Instead, we identify gaps in service and strive to provide missing service. (Note: this 'no-ego' approach also applies to how we treat each other and our belief in "selfless service.")

OUR STRATEGY

How we will make FS stronger for the future



We have developed a road-map for making FS stronger as we approach the 50th year anniversary. It has six components, or “strategies.” We will focus our activities in these six areas.

1. Stronger FS (Structure and Systems)

Activities for this area:

- Develop mission, principles and strategy (this document)
- Propose ideas for restructuring governance of FS (a document is already prepared with such ideas, will be discussed and revised by few key people and then presented to all members for their comments)
- Acceptance of the final ideas in the next Annual General Meeting (probably in Jan 2019)

2. Communication

Activities for this area:

- Establish procedures and a system to gather and record information on all activities conducted at FS
- Establish standard formats and procedures to produce variety of reports and updates, and make them more professional
- Update the FS website
- Develop publicity materials – brochures, video clips, and posters that are professional and effective
- Develop a system and procedures for archiving document and photos at FS

3. Coordination and Accountability

Activities for this area:

- Establish procedures to ensure effective and timely communication among various people at FS (staff, volunteers, mentors, and others)
- Define roles and scope of responsibility for all key people at FS (Governing Council members, trustees, staff, EC members, mentors, etc.); avoid duplication of efforts
- Develop procedures, forms, and other systems needed to ensure that all necessary administrative tasks (day-to-day administration, financial, and regulatory matters) are addressed effectively and timely.

4. Volunteer and Staff-based Activities

Activities for this area:

- Develop procedures for conducting all activities at FS to ensure they support the mission and principles and that they are effective, high quality and timely.
- Develop procedures, work distribution and expectation for the paid staff and volunteers (students) so that there is synergy and coordination between voluntary and staff-based activities and ensure that there are no silos created between the two types of activities.

5. Volunteer Self-development

Activities for this area:

- Develop procedure or system to ensure that proper and sufficient activities to promote self-development of student volunteers occurs
- Develop procedures and guidelines for EC camp to ensure their effectiveness and value for the volunteers; these should include, among other things, guidelines for the past members and others who conduct various sessions at the EC camps
- Develop procedures for the past members who are assigned mentoring roles to ensure their working with younger members is appropriate and effective
- Develop guidelines for proper conduct while at the FS campus and during all FS activities

6. Past Member Involvement

Activities for this area:

- Create and maintain master database with contact information of all FS members – past and current
- Identify and document specialized knowledge and experiences that the past members may have and that can be useful at FS and for the younger members
- Identify opportunities for the past members residing in Vadodara to get involved with FS activities in variety of ways
- Develop guidelines for the staff and younger members for interacting with the past members who show up at FS and to help them feel welcome and reconnect with FS
- Identify opportunities for the past members residing away from Vadodara to get involved with FS activities remotely in variety of ways, and occasionally by visiting FS

Self-development of volunteers means they become -

- more effective leaders
- better at communicating
- better at expressing oneself
- better in planning and organizing
- better at interpersonal relations and team work
- more friendly and social
- better at making friends
- better at managing time
- better at keeping commitments and being responsible person
- more altruistic
- more tolerant of differences
- more “We” & “Us” vs. “I”
- more humble
- more willing to make sacrifices
- good at applying social / emotional intelligence