

GREAT DECISIONS IN MINNESOTA **GUIDELINES FOR GROUP LEADERS**

Great Decisions is sponsored nationally by the Foreign Policy Association and coordinated in this state by the Minnesota International Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that inspires our community to understand global issues and cultures in an ever changing world.

For more information, contact 612.625.4421,
visit www.miglobe.org,
or email mic@umn.edu

GUIDELINES FOR *GREAT DECISIONS* GROUP LEADERS

PROGRAM PARTNERS – WHO ARE THEY?

Great Decisions is a program that promotes citizen awareness and discussion about timely foreign policy issues. Eight topics are chosen for consideration each year. The program is sponsored nationally by the *Foreign Policy Association* in New York and coordinated in this state by the Minnesota International Center.

The Minnesota International Center (MIC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan member-supported organization that inspires our community to understand global issues and cultures in an ever changing world. MIC promotes this understanding through a variety of educational programs in classrooms, workplaces and communities. Because of MIC's role in coordinating and supporting the *Great Decisions* program in Minnesota, we ask that you refer to MIC in your publicity materials and acknowledge MIC's role at your discussion groups. A sample statement is below:

Great Decisions is sponsored nationally by the Foreign Policy Association in New York and coordinated in this state by the Minnesota International Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes international understanding in Minnesota. For more information, call 612-625-4421.

Membership in MIC

As a nonprofit, MIC depends not only on program registration fees which are very modest, but on contributions from foundations, corporations and most importantly, the contributions from individual members to fund the organization's efforts. So, although belonging to MIC is not a requirement for *Great Decisions* groups, we encourage group leaders to tell the members of their groups about MIC, the benefits of supporting the organization, and the program opportunities. In addition to our website, members receive a newsletter, the *Communiqué*, and emailed online newsletters announcing programs.

PROGRAM MATERIALS

- **Ordering**

MIC requests that orders for materials be submitted on the order form enclosed with the *Great Decisions* brochure. Orders will be shipped upon receipt of payment, credit card information, or purchase order for which an invoice is prepared by MIC. If you wish to pick up an order at the MIC office, please allow a minimum of two days for processing. Allow 7 to 10 days for processing a mail order requesting the materials to be sent.

- **Briefing Book**

The *Great Decisions* Briefing Book is the backbone of the *Great Decisions* materials and contains articles skillfully written by national experts on each of the year's eight topics. The Briefing Books is usually available for distribution in mid-January and can be ordered from MIC. There is a discount for 10 or more orders sent to the same address or picked up at the MIC office.

- **Video/DVD**

A two-video set or a DVD, prepared by the Foreign Policy Association features national and international experts speaking on each of the eight topics. This resource can also be ordered from MIC.

- **Teachers Guide**

The guide contains suggestions for facilitating and enhancing discussions for use by Teachers or Group Leaders. Single copies can be ordered from MIC and are usually available in February.

- **Television Series**

Twin Cities Public Television annually carries some or all of the *Great Decisions* series, which consists of half-hour segments which supplement the year's topics. We encourage leaders in other areas of Minnesota to contact their public television affiliates to advocate carrying this series on local stations as well. For more information, please talk with Carol Steinberg at MIC.

- **Opinion Ballots**

Ballots are included in each *Great Decisions* briefing book to voice your opinion on questions concerning the eight topics. If returned to FPA by June 30th, the ballots are summarized and presented to national opinion leaders. In these crucial times, this is an especially important opportunity. Voting can also be done online.

The Foreign Policy Association's *Great Decisions* Website, www.greatdecisions.org Offers additional online resources for all participants and special package discounts on materials used in the classrooms.

GREAT DECISIONS SPEAKER DIRECTORY

Each year MIC identifies and selects local speakers to address the Great Decisions topics of the year. Speakers are of very high caliber. They include college professors, business people, and others in the community with strong international backgrounds and expertise in one or more of the year's eight topics. MIC annually produces a directory listing these speakers with biographical and contact information. The selected speakers have agreed to be contacted by MIC's *Great Decisions* groups to speak at their meetings. Each group leader is asked to provide the speaker a minimum honorarium of \$50, and travel expenses, if the location is outside of the metropolitan area.

Arrangements for the speaker and for the honorarium are usually handled directly between the group and the speaker. If you wish to plan a larger meeting open to the public, MIC staff can assist you in referring speakers who have experience in addressing larger audiences. We ask that leaders are careful to confirm directly and in writing with each speaker the name, location, time, and place of a group's meeting.

THE MEETING

We recommend that you consult the *Great Decisions Tips for Facilitation* for helpful suggestions about setting up the meeting and facilitating the discussion.

- **Meeting Schedules:**

It is helpful to set up a schedule for several meetings in advance. Please provide MIC with a copy of your flyers/schedules, so that we may refer new participants to groups and assist speakers if they are unsure who has contacted them. We also refer new participants to meetings of groups that have openings for new members.

REPORTING TO MIC

We ask that groups keep a record on the attached form of their meeting dates, topics, speakers, number of attendees, and number of unduplicated participants plus a list of participants, if possible. MIC will request this information twice a year, in December and in late spring, to use in summarizing and evaluating program activity, as well as for reporting to funders and applying for grants. MIC may contact participants about other opportunities.

MIC summarizes the number of meeting attendees and also appreciates the number of *unduplicated* participants who take part one or more times during the year. This helps us determine the impact of our programs.

FEES

Each group is free to set up their own structure for collecting fees for costs of running the group, paying the speaker honoraria and refreshments. It should be clear in the description of the fees which organization receives the money and what it covers.

FEEDBACK

- **Audience**

Audience feedback about your meeting content, speakers, and arrangements is very important. We anticipate that you will ask your audience to complete evaluation forms for each meeting. MIC is interested in receiving copies of any summaries that you might complete of audience feedback, including actual notable comments from participants themselves.

- **Group Leader Feedback**

Periodically, MIC will ask for your feedback about the *Great Decisions* program, the *Great Decisions* speakers you have hosted, and how MIC may assist you. This helps us know what has worked well and what has been a challenge. Also, please keep MIC updated on any changes in your phone number, email and mailing addresses.

- **Speaker Feedback**

MIC also asks *Great Decisions* speakers for their feedback about audience response, arrangements for their presentations, and how MIC may assist them.

DID YOU KNOW....?

- It is not necessary to cover all eight topics each year? Some groups prefer to do a larger program once or twice a year, choosing the topics most of interest to their constituencies.
- MIC offers consultation to groups that are beginning or have a question or concern to discuss.

RESOURCES FOR GROUP LEADERS

We especially recommend the *Great Decisions* Tips for Facilitators as helpful. Additional resources are included in the websites of the Foreign Policy Association, www.fpa.org, and the *Great Decisions* program specifically, www.greatdecisions.org. MIC also offers consultation with volunteers who are active in *Great Decisions*. If you would like to talk with a volunteer consultant, please contact Carol Steinberg at 612.625.2102.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To learn more about *Great Decisions* and the Minnesota International Center, contact us at 612.625.4421 for more information. The following MIC staff are particularly involved in the *Great Decisions* program:

Carol Steinberg, *Community Programs Manager*
Catherine Born, *Vice-President*
Carol Engebretson Byrne, *President*

THANKS!

The MIC staff wishes to express appreciation for all the time and effort that Great Decisions Leaders contribute. Without you, this program would not exist. In this crucial time, the involvement of concerned and informed citizens in foreign policy decisions is vital. Thank you so much!
