



October 2016

Testimonials from...

1. The CEO of EIL Intercultural Learning - an Irish non-profit organization, member of FEIL.
2. The former Director of the Experiment in International Living (FEIL)

Testimonial 1

The EIL Worldwide Network will celebrate its 85th anniversary in 2017. The Experiment in International Living, also known as EIL, is based on two very simple, yet enduring ideas, that "People learn to live together by living together" and that we can build "world peace one friendship at a time". Now a UN designated Peace Messenger Organization the EIL Network provides an extensive and innovative range of intercultural, educational and experiential learning opportunities for thousands of people across the world each year. As the Director of EIL in Ireland and as a former President of Federation EIL I'm only too well aware that the simplest ideas can also be the most complicated to turn in to practice. And no organization sails through its history without hitting road blocks and bumps along the way. Indeed, if you don't reach a crossroads as an organization at least once a decade then you may just be stagnating. For organizations to thrive they need to be questioned and challenged both internally and externally.

Caplor Horizons have developed non-threatening, creative and innovate ways to do this that will leave you surprised with the outcomes. They've developed methodologies and their model the "Caplor House"; they have creative approaches to graphics that allow you to see things differently. In fact they call it "thinking differently". I was so impressed with the work of Ian and Lorna and their team of Advisors at Caplor Horizons when they facilitated the Federation EIL strategic development process that I made a mental note that when my own organization in Ireland embarked on its updated strategy process I wanted Caplor Horizons involved. And I didn't regret it.

Caplor Horizons facilitated EIL here in Ireland to look at our values, vision and mission in through a series of fresh and engaging exercises. Their own years of experience as leaders in the NGO and social enterprise sectors grounded the exercises in a reality often difficult to find in external facilitators. They challenged us to be bold in building our strategy and encouraged us to envision where we could be as an organization 10 years from now. Then they helped us paint the detailed picture for the next 3 years. We achieved an enormous amount in a relatively short time. All the time the process was enjoyable and engaging.

Kevin Hickey, CEO EIL Ireland

Testimonial 2

I can enthusiastically recommend Caplor Horizons to any organization serious about developing a bold and forward thinking strategy. Or even just for a one day session to motivate a team, to get people thinking outside the box and to reinvigorate an organization. If you want to “think differently” about the same questions all organizations face then you should get in touch with Ian, Lorna and the team at Caplor Horizons.

As Director of the Federation of the Experiment in International Living (FEIL), I am writing to summarize our strategy process and endorse Caplor Horizons. Caplor Horizons has carried out very high quality work with FEIL.

In 1954, Experiment national offices worldwide joined forces to establish Federation EIL and developed an international constitution to coordinate their network of educational exchange programs. Today, twenty three national organizations comprise the FEIL, with collective ability to conduct intercultural education programs in each other’s country and the power of pooled resources for forming a worldwide network.

In mid-2014 we realized the FEIL had reached a very significant stage: a new Board and Director was in place, a fresh and compelling strategy was needed and a lot of skilled work was necessary to engage our membership effectively in the process. We conducted an extensive search for organizations that could facilitate and add value to a renewal process; to assist our Federation reevaluate and realign its strategic goals. Caplor Horizons was selected. Because the FEIL is a not for profit organization working on a large scale across many countries, yet with a very small secretariat with highly limited resources, the scale of the challenge was complex and substantial; this included working closely with the leaders of our membership organizations who have varied backgrounds, speak different languages and operate in different cultural contexts.

Work commenced at an important gathering of FEIL representatives in Dublin in September 2014. Initial and in depth consultations then took place via questionnaires and semi structured interviews.

Both Ian Williams and Lorna Pearcey have been very helpful and central to this work. Alongside Ian and Lorna, six volunteer Advisors provided excellent input: Simon Oldroyd, Nick Snook, Rachel Ritchie, Deven Thakkar, Peter Moore and Ben Oldroyd. By bringing additional resources to the process - for instance, Brand and Mission analysis and incredible infographic displays of the research, including a ‘Road Map’ about future strategic direction - Caplor Horizons expanded the scope of what was possible. Other examples of how Advisors contributed included: strengthening background research, improving communications, providing wider perspectives on federal strategy and leadership. It was an impressive team effort throughout, shaping the overall process and helping us make breakthroughs at different stages.

In early 2015 - as we moved from the research phase into the recommendation and adoption phase - Caplor Horizon’s continued guidance was very important. Because we have a varied membership, with key stakeholders who don’t always agree, Caplor Horizon’s professional guidance and consensus building was vital to enabling us to succeed in agreeing a new strategy.

We reached a highly significant point in Feb 2015. I attended an important meeting with Board members in the UK. Caplor Horizons facilitated this. An important conclusion was that FEIL’s structure required

priority attention (the original focus, for a new strategy, had been on brand, strategic growth, financial sustainability and mission). As a result four structural scenarios were developed afterwards and our twenty three country members were then consulted about these; improvements and fresh propositions were sought.

This additional work pushed the limits of the resources committed; we are very grateful to the Waterloo Foundation to contributing in a timely way, therefore helping bring about a positive conclusion.

The crucial final step was our annual General Assembly in May. Ian attended this and was most effective as a facilitator where he proved to be lithe, responsive and adept at synthesizing many complex viewpoints. He kept us on point without being rigid and helped us to hear each other in ways that we aren't always successful with on our own.

The months of hard work reached a very fruitful conclusion: a transformative new strategy - including an exciting new business model and structure - was unanimously agreed upon at the end of the General Assembly.

Caplor Horizons was wonderful to work with throughout our process. I have no hesitation recommending them to others that are assessing and developing their strategy. It has been a pleasure for me to work with the Caplor Horizons team since September and I am, of course, delighted with the outcome.

Polli-Jo Moryl, former Director, FEIL