



IDEAS LEADERSHIP HOPE

**The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)
Leadership Programs**

**RELAUNCH:
REVAMPING THE MARSHALL MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP**

Executive Summary

The MMF Audit was conducted by Ovidiu Anemtoaicei, a monitoring and evaluation consultant with more than 10 years of experience.

The following final MMF report includes, in shortened form, the summary and recommendations presented to GMF's Leadership Programs team.

I. Introduction

In winter 2023, the Leadership Programs team paused the Marshall Memorial Fellowships (MMF) to conduct a comprehensive audit of the GMF's flagship 42-year-old program. The audit's goal was to adapt the program structure and length to account for societal shifts, refine the program's place among other international visitor exchange programs, ensure the program is equitable and inclusive from start to finish, and develop a pipeline of potential donors to obtain 100% funding.

The current Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan guides the systematic assessment and the strategic enhancement of the MMF program. **This document presents actionable data derived from a comprehensive analysis of interviews, conversations with focus groups, and one-on-one discussions for revamping the MMF program, and recommends a robust framework for future monitoring, evaluation, and learning.** The suggested framework places a strong emphasis on data quality, transparency, and adaptive management to enhance the program's outcomes and align them with the broader objectives of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). The MMF program, as the living embodiment of GMF, encapsulates its mission to foster transatlantic relations and leadership development.

The MEL plan employs a **mixed-methods approach**, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Its key elements include:

- **focus groups:** Conversations with 19 focus groups with diverse participants, including alumni, city coordinators, and other stakeholders, took place between February and August 2024. These sessions provided valuable insights into various aspects of the program.
- **key informant interviews:** Interviews with 25 key stakeholders, including donors, board members, and program staff were held to gather in-depth perspectives on the program's strengths and areas for improvement.
- **individual discussions:** Notes from one-on-one meetings with 145 alumni and other stakeholders contained feedback and details of MMF-related experiences.
- **document analysis:** Program materials, strategic documents, and other relevant sources were reviewed.
- **evaluability assessment:** Identifying the program's strengths and weaknesses determined its readiness for evaluation.

The executive summary is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the MEL process.

The data analysis section presents summaries of focus-group discussions and interviews, key findings, and recommendations. The report then discusses MMF's strategic advantages and challenges before introducing new theories of change, an implementation timeline, expected outcomes, additional recommendations, and an estimated budget.

The analysis identified several **key findings**:

- **Program Effectiveness:** The MMF program is effective in fostering transatlantic leadership and enhancing cultural and intellectual exchange. However, there is a need to improve diversity through enhanced recruitment strategies and more inclusive program content.

- **Content Relevance:** Updating the curriculum to address contemporary global issues, such as global racial dynamics, modern leadership development curricula, and cultural competency, is essential.
- **Participant Support:** Increased support for fellows and city coordinators, including comprehensive pre-program training and continuous support during the program, is necessary to improve participant experiences.
- **Alumni Engagement:** Enhanced networking opportunities and ongoing alumni engagement are critical areas for improvement.
- **Administrative Transparency:** Improved communication and decision-making transparency are needed to build trust and collaboration.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Exploring new funding models and involving alumni in fundraising efforts are crucial for the program's long-term viability.

Based on these findings, the MEL Plan suggests the following **actionable recommendations**:

- **Enhanced Program Design:** Maintain the program's 24-day length while increasing pre- and post-program engagements to balance immersive experiences with more frequent interactions, meeting the diverse needs of participants.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Revise recruitment practices and update the curriculum to be more inclusive and representative of global perspectives.
- **Curriculum Updates:** Regularly update the curriculum to ensure it remains relevant to current global challenges.
- **Support Systems:** Provide more training and resources for coordinators and robust support mechanisms for participants.
- **Alumni Network:** Use the alumni network for mentoring, fundraising, recruitment, and sustained engagement.
- **Transparent Communication:** Ensure clear communication of administrative decisions and financial management to build trust among participants and alumni.
- **Funding Models:** Explore new funding models and partnerships to secure the program's long-term sustainability.

As a living embodiment of GMF's mission, the MMF program's focus on data quality, transparency, and adaptive management will contribute to the program's ongoing improvement and success, thereby reinforcing GMF's commitment to fostering strong transatlantic relations and leadership development.

II. Data Analysis

A. Summaries

1. Focus Groups and One-on-Ones

Throughout the review, discussions with focus groups and one-on-one conversations were held with MMF program alumni. Nineteen focus groups were conducted between February and August 2024 to gather insights and feedback from alumni to help revitalize and improve the program. The 75 one-on-one meetings with MMF alumni focused on collecting firsthand experiences, concerns, and suggestions for improvement. These meetings reflect a diverse range of experiences and perspectives from different cohorts and cities.

Inclusion and Diversity: Participants expressed strong opinions about the importance of maintaining a diverse and inclusive cohort, not just in age but also in career stage and

professional experience. There was support for a mixed approach to recruitment, combining nominations with an open application process to ensure diversity and inclusivity. There were calls to ensure diversity in sector and background among fellows, with a focus on selecting individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the transatlantic dialogue. Alumni also highlighted the need to improve addressing the experiences of fellows and alumni of color through more diverse programming and support systems. While some supported an age range of 30-42, others emphasized the significance of position and experience over specific age brackets. The balance between maintaining professional diversity and ensuring candidates possess a certain level of maturity and curiosity was a recurring point of discussion.

Program Structure: Alumni emphasized the importance of having clear objectives and expectations for fellows during and after the program. They called for a more structured approach to ensure fellows understand expectations and options for contributing to the program post-fellowship. Alumni highlighted the need for clear output requirements linked to strategic goals and having concrete deliverables, such as projects, reports, or presentations, which provide a sense of accomplishment and contribute to GMF's broader mission. Participants suggested that these outputs should be flexible enough to cater to individual career goals while being substantial and impactful. Many alumni were concerned that program changes would dilute its impact. They strongly supported maintaining the month-long duration and visiting three cities as the current length allows for deep engagement and meaningful experiences. Shortening it could undermine the program's prestige and effectiveness.

Leadership Development: The program's focus on leadership development was appreciated, with calls for more emphasis on stress management and inclusive, diverse, and sustainable leadership practices. Fellows appreciated opportunities to practice soft skills through various program activities, but they also noted the need for a greater focus on stress management and coping mechanisms. The need for personal and professional development was underscored, with suggestions for incorporating masterclasses that foster leadership skill development and thematic seminars into the program. Alumni expressed a desire for more holistic and intersectional approaches to covering the program's five main themes: leadership; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); democracy and civil society; economy and sustainability; and diplomacy and security. As it might be challenging to cover all themes in each city, participants noted that a focus on the city's strengths and unique characteristics could provide a richer experience.

Cross-Cultural Components: Incorporating more cross-cultural and DEI elements into the pre-departure phase was suggested to better prepare fellows for their experiences. Expanding the definition of transatlantic relations to include broader cultural contexts was also recommended.

Impactful Experiences: The program's most impactful parts included visits to unusual cities, high-level meetings, unique professional and personal growth opportunities, and the ability to understand local characteristics in the United States and Europe. The most memorable experiences often involved cultural immersion and personal interactions, providing profound insights and learning opportunities. These experiences fostered deep, meaningful connections and professional development, helping participants to gain confidence and broaden their perspectives.

Program Logistics and Challenges: Alumni highlighted logistical challenges, such as difficulty in organizing individual appointments and last-minute travel arrangements. Some alumni appreciated the flexibility and personal growth opportunities that the individual appointments offered, but others found them challenging and in need of more structured support. The general recommendation was to strongly encourage rather than require them, and for city coordinators to provide better guidance and support. For their part, coordinators needed clearer guidance on what meals and expenses are covered and suggested that these guidelines should be communicated to fellows in advance.

Alumni Engagement: Alumni engagement emerged as a crucial area for improvement. Participants called for more effective use of alumni networks, better communication tools, more regular follow-up, and opportunities to stay involved through local events, thematic groups, and other GMF and alumni-led initiatives. Other suggestions included virtual webinars on current issues, regional hubs for in-person activities, and the revival of the Alumni Leadership Council with a more inclusive and transparent approach. The creation of a searchable alumni database and more consistent communication were highlighted as ways to enhance alumni connectivity and involvement.

Trust and Communication: Alumni expressed concern about the lack of trust and transparency within GMF, highlighting a perceived divide between past fellows and upcoming program changes. Clear and honest communication, especially regarding GMF's financial needs, was deemed crucial to rebuild trust. Alumni were frustrated with being contacted only for financial contributions.

2. Alumni of Color

The Alumni of Color focus group, held on February 29, 2024, gathered to discuss their MMF program experiences and to provide input on greater equity and inclusion. The discussions were framed around the program's goals and suggestions for MMF's future.

Setting the Stage: The meeting began with expressions of gratitude to key organizers and setting the tone for open and honest dialogue. The intention was to rebuild MMF with a focus on equity and inclusion, informed by the experiences of fellows and alumni of color.

Participant Insights: Participants highlighted the need for more intentionality in the experiences provided by MMF. They recounted positive and negative aspects of their experiences, emphasizing the importance of having diverse cohorts and ensuring better representation, particularly among Europeans. There was a call for city coordinators to understand the importance of diverse networks to provide more meaningful and connected experiences for the whole cohort.

Experiences and Challenges: Key points included the need for better connectivity and representation in city tours and experiences, the importance for city coordinators to be honest and deeply connected to the communities they represent, and the necessity of including migration and immigration topics more prominently in the program.

Aspirations for MMF: The group expressed hopes for better utilization of the alumni network, emphasizing the need for alumni to hold funders accountable to higher DEI standards. The group stressed that fellows of color should not bear the burden of educating others during the fellowship. Instead, a baseline of understanding should be established before travel.

Structural Considerations: Participants discussed the MMF program's potential restructuring, including the idea of a nine-month fellowship with a mix of virtual and in-person components. There was mixed feedback on individual appointments, with some finding them valuable and others noting logistical challenges. The idea of fellows creating research questions or hypotheses to explore during their travels was positively received.

Recommendations for the Future: To make MMF more equitable and inclusive, participants recommended intentional selection and preparation of experiences and guides, enhanced alumni engagement for mentoring and fundraising, and structural adjustments to balance in-person and virtual components while maintaining the fellowship's integrity and depth.

Moving Forward: The focus group concluded with a strong commitment to ensuring that MMF becomes a more equitable and inclusive program that attracts diverse participants and provides them with the support and resources needed so that they can thrive. Participants emphasized the importance of intentionality, representation, and preparation in creating meaningful experiences for all fellows.

3. City Coordinators

Focus groups for city coordinators held on January 17 and 22, 2024, discussed their MMF experiences. The conversations offered insights into the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and potential future directions.

Fulfilling MMF's Primary Goals: MMF's primary goal, according to city coordinators, is to develop a network of mid-career transatlantic leaders poised to influence key policy and cultural discussions. The program should foster deep intellectual cultural understanding and backchannel diplomacy. City coordinators highlighted the importance of fostering transatlantic relationships and creating valuable connections, breaking down stereotypes, and promoting shared values. Ensuring future leaders are familiar with key issues and understand the nuances of smaller cities was also highlighted.

Experience as Fellows and City Coordinators: City coordinators emphasized the importance of critical leadership skills such as curiosity, lifelong learning, and the ability to critically interrogate one's belief system. Networking skills were deemed essential, particularly when different cohorts are mixed. City coordinators reflected on the practical aspects of participating in the program, noting the importance of socio-emotional support for fellows, especially those with family commitments.

Program Structure, Content, and Group Travel Size: While some city coordinators considered the idea of shortening the program or splitting it into two segments interesting, there were concerns about the practicalities and a strong interest in maintaining the program's length to ensure its impact. The concept of having fellows create hypotheses or research questions to explore during their travels was well received, but flexibility and support from city coordinators would be required. Individual appointments were another topic of debate, with some city coordinators finding them valuable and others noting logistical challenges. City coordinators should strongly encourage and guide individual appointments. Coordinators supported smaller cohort sizes if necessary to match available resources but stressed the importance of maintaining communication and engagement with the broader alumni community.

Leadership Skills and Impactful Program Elements: Critical leadership skills identified included equity and inclusion, problem-solving, resilience, empathy, and basic tolerance. The program's most impactful elements included informal time with fellows, practical follow-ups, and the network built through the program.

Other Suggestions: Participants emphasized the importance of alumni engagement and fundraising efforts. They believe that the MMF program has a unique and valuable role in fostering transatlantic understanding, developing future leaders, and expressed a commitment to ensuring its continued success.

4. Donors

Interviews with donors focused on understanding what inspired them to support leadership development programs. Donors highlighted that MMF aligns well with their leadership development work, viewing the program as a continuation of their mission to activate the local community and enhance their reach through strong partnerships. Donors remain particularly motivated by MMF's potential to foster leadership within communities such as Detroit, a reflection of a desire to connect Midwest cities to the international community and advance inclusive, democratic societies. This alignment between donor goals and MMF's mission reinforces the program's relevance and effectiveness in addressing local and global challenges.

MMF's Impact: Donors noted that the program's influence on individual participants is significant. They cited examples such as Joe Cimperman of Global Cleveland, who leverages his experiences to bring other leaders into the fold, thereby amplifying MMF's effect. This individual-level impact is considered essential to applying lessons learned to the Cleveland community. The interviews also highlighted the importance of the length of MMF program travel, which allows fellows to develop their leadership abilities in a sustained and challenging environment. This long-term engagement is seen as vital for producing leaders who can contribute effectively to their communities even after the fellowship concludes.

Engagement and sustainability: While the program has made strides, there is a clear understanding that stronger alumni engagement is needed to sustain the program's impact and ensure that the fellowship serves as the beginning of a long-term relationship rather than a one-time experience. Donors emphasized that networking is crucial, starting as soon as participants are selected. Individual meetings and exposure to high-level government officials are also deemed important for the fellowship's effectiveness.

DEI: Donors acknowledge the importance of these elements in leadership development, noting that various communities need to see themselves represented in public, private, and nonprofit leadership roles. DEI efforts are broad, encompassing first-time college students, geographical diversity, and individuals with disabilities. Donors stressed that equity is fundamental to their initiatives, and that leadership programs should contribute to promoting diversity and fostering social cohesion by emphasizing representation in the cohorts and supporting diverse leaders.

Areas for Improvement: Donors focused on alumni engagement as a method to maintain momentum after fellowship travel. They recommended creating more continuity and connection with internship and public service programs. They also highlighted the need to expand the program's reach beyond the existing network, suggesting strategic partnerships

with local entities to bolster impact. The importance of listening to the alumni community and incorporating their feedback into future program developments was also emphasized.

Future Support of MMF: Donors expressed a willingness to continue their collaboration with the program, recognizing the strong past relationship and life-changing impact on participants. They expressed openness to supporting specific areas of the program, particularly those that **enhance alumni engagement and strategic partnerships**. There is a clear interest in exploring new avenues of collaboration, such as hosting alumni gatherings and connecting MMF with other GMF initiatives such as GMF Cities. Donors emphasized that, while the program has a solid foundation, more effort is needed to reach new participants and sustain the momentum of the fellowship's benefits. **Expanding local partnerships and diversifying the funding base** are seen as critical steps for ensuring the program's long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

Moving Forward: Interviews captured donors' insights, highlighting the alignment of MMF with their philanthropic goals, the significant individual and community impact, the importance of networking and exposure, the centrality of DEI, and the need for enhanced alumni engagement and strategic partnerships. These themes offer valuable recommendations for GMF to elevate its leadership development initiatives and ensure their long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

5. MMF Alumni Board Members

Key informant interviews with three GMF board members, who are also MMF alumni, provided valuable insights into the effectiveness and strategic vision of GMF, MMF, and other leadership programs. A thematic analysis of the three interviews revealed several major topics that are critical for understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the program.

1. Alumni Engagement and Utilization:

- The importance of engaging alumni was strongly emphasized in interviews. The lack of alumni engagement is criticized as a missed opportunity that negatively impacts the organization. Better alumni involvement is highlighted as crucial for the program's success and sustainability, with local initiatives suggested to strengthen alumni networks.

2. Board Involvement and Support:

- The board's role in supporting the leadership programs is a recurring theme. Limited board involvement due to busy schedules is noted, but there is a suggestion that younger members could engage more actively. The board's role in fundraising, program oversight, mentoring, and networking was also discussed, with calls for more active involvement to enhance program visibility and support.

3. Diversity and Inclusion:

- The need for diversity and inclusion within the programs was highlighted, with an emphasis on selecting a diverse cohort of fellows that reflects broader society. Incorporating DEI issues into the curriculum and ensuring a bias-free, egalitarian selection process were also stressed, underlining a commitment to making the programs more representative and inclusive.

4. **Strategic Alignment with GMF Mission:**

- Aligning the leadership programs with GMF's broader mission was another key theme. Expanding the program's reach and involving more private-sector participants were discussed as ways to align with GMF's evolving mission. The importance of formative experiences in fostering transatlantic relations and addressing emerging global challenges through the curriculum was also emphasized.

5. **Curriculum and Program Design:**

- The effectiveness and design of the curriculum were discussed, with a focus on the need for the board to be more involved in shaping it to meet fellows' learning and development needs. The current curriculum was praised, but suggestions were made to incorporate more social and civil society issues and provide fellows with opportunities for individual appointments.

6. **Resource Allocation and Financial Sustainability:**

- Financial support and sustainability were critical themes, with calls for more financial resources and strategic support from the board. The importance of financial responsibilities and equitable access to the program was also discussed, along with the need for exploring fellows' financial responsibilities and ensuring the program's financial sustainability through corporate partnerships and other initiatives.

7. **Program Outcomes and Metrics of Success:**

- Measuring the program's effectiveness and impact was a significant theme. Metrics such as reliance on external funding, alumni engagement, and the retention of fellows were highlighted as indicators of program success.

In conclusion, a thematic analysis revealed the need for increased alumni engagement, more active board involvement, greater diversity and inclusion, strategic alignment with GMF's mission, effective curriculum design, adequate resource allocation, and clear metrics for assessing program success. Addressing these themes can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the MMF and GMF's other leadership programs.

6. **GMF Staff**

Key informant interviews with 20 GMF staff members collectively paint a comprehensive picture of the MMF program, revealing strengths and areas for improvement. The MMF program is widely recognized for its goal of **fostering the next generation of transatlantic leaders** and building a **diverse and extensive network** of influential individuals in a range of sectors and geographies. This aligns well with GMF's mission of **strengthening democracy and promoting transatlantic understanding and cooperation**.

One of MMF's most celebrated aspects is its **network-building capacity**. Participants consistently highlighted the program's success in creating a vast and diverse network, which includes individuals from many sectors and regions. This network is seen as a significant asset, providing invaluable connections, and fostering a deep sense of attachment to GMF.

The inclusion of **diverse backgrounds and perspectives** remained an essential component for an enriching program. Staff stressed the need for diverse cohorts to bring multiple perspectives and enhance the overall experience. A continued focus on **diversity and**

inclusion is seen as a critical factor in ensuring that the program remains relevant and impactful.

MMF's **immersive travel experiences** are **transformative**, leaving a lasting impact on fellows and helping them develop a profound understanding of transatlantic relations. The program's **historical significance and prestige** were also frequently mentioned, underscoring its role as a **cornerstone of GMF's legacy**.

Despite these strengths, the interviews also revealed several **areas for improvement**. One of the most cited issues is the **lack of sustained engagement with alumni**. While the program is effective in building initial connections, there are concerns that these connections are not adequately maintained. Many interviewees pointed to **missed opportunities** for leveraging the alumni network for broader GMF goals, including programmatic support and fundraising. Regular updates, alumni involvement in fundraising and program development, and improved **database management** were suggested as ways to better track, engage, and maintain active alumni.

Resource constraints are another significant challenge. The MMF program is perceived as under-resourced in terms of funding and staffing. This has led to difficulties in effective program management and alumni engagement. Ensuring **financial stability** and **long-term planning** was identified as crucial for the program's sustainability. Staff suggested exploring new **funding models** and engaging alumni in fundraising efforts. **Measuring the program's impact** and success was also underscored as essential. Participants highlighted the need for clear goals and robust **evaluation methods** to ensure continuous improvement and demonstrate the program's effectiveness.

The **selection process**, while generally praised for its rigor, was perceived in part as overly complex and lacking in prioritizing transatlantic experience. A clearer approach to selecting fellows could help ensure that participants are more likely to remain engaged with GMF and contribute meaningfully to its mission.

There was a consensus on the need for a well-balanced program structure. The **three-week travel model**, while valued for its depth and impact, was noted as being exclusionary for some candidates, particularly those with families. There were some calls for a more **flexible and inclusive structure that combines virtual and in-person** sessions and could accommodate a broader range of participants. Staff strongly recommended integrating topics such as **global racial dynamics** and **cultural competency** into the curriculum to ensure that it remains impactful and current. A **well-structured virtual and in-person program** for fellows was identified as crucial for maximizing MMF's effectiveness. Participants called for more **pre-program training** and **continuous support** throughout the program to ensure participants' success.

GMF staff highlighted the need for more **personalized content** and **interactive formats** to support individual growth effectively. Improving **networking opportunities** and **engagement** was deemed vital for professional growth. Staff emphasized their interest in supporting networking sessions and collaborative opportunities with their own team to enhance the program's effectiveness.

Transparency and **clear communication** from the administration were highlighted as critical for building trust and improving outcomes. Several interviewees noted a disconnect between the program and other GMF workstreams, suggesting that better internal collaboration from

both sides could enhance the program's impact. There is a need for more cohesive strategies to integrate fellows and alumni into various GMF activities to foster a more unified approach to achieving the organization's mission.

Ensuring **financial stability** and **long-term planning** was identified as crucial for the program's sustainability. Participants suggested exploring new **funding models** and engaging alumni in fundraising efforts. **Measuring the program's impact** and success was underscored as essential. Participants highlighted the need for clear goals and robust **evaluation methods** to ensure continuous improvement and demonstrate the program's effectiveness.

Overall, the MMF program is highly valued for its unique contributions to GMF's mission and its ability to foster a diverse network of transatlantic leaders. To maximize the program's impact and ensure its sustainability, interviewees highlighted the need for more resources and strategic alignment with broader GMF goals. Implementing the suggested recommendations, such as improving internal integration, securing stable funding, refining the selection process, and revising the program structure, will help strengthen the MMF program and enhance its role in promoting transatlantic relations and democratic values. The findings underscore the importance of **clear program goals, a flexible and inclusive structure, diverse and relevant content, effective networking, transparent administrative support, active alumni involvement, financial stability, and robust impact measurement.** Addressing these issues through the strategic recommendations detailed below can significantly enhance the MMF program's sustainable impact and foster a diverse network of transatlantic leaders committed to promoting **democratic values** and **transatlantic cooperation.**

III. Recommendations

THEME	CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATIONS	DETAILS
PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DURATION	Program Length	Maintain program duration	Alumni favor longer programs (24 days) to allow for meaningful engagement.
	Cohort Size	Consider smaller cohorts	Adjust cohort size to around 12 people to match available resources.
	Virtual and In-Person Blend	Hybrid model of engagement	Explore a nine-month fellowship with virtual and in-person elements.
	Program Flexibility	Revise program structure	Develop a more flexible and inclusive program structure that accommodates a broader range of participants. This could involve shorter travel periods or alternative formats that cater to different needs.

THEME	CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATIONS	DETAILS
PROGRAM VALUES AND GOALS	Core Values and Selection Criteria	Define and integrate core values in the selection process	Clearly articulate the values of the MMF program in the interview and application form.
	Strategic Alignment	Develop strategic alignment	Ensure the MMF program aligns with GMF's broader organizational goals and strategic priorities. This will enhance the program's impact and relevance within the organization.
PROGRAM CONTENT	Cross-Cultural Training	Emphasize DEI and cross-cultural training pre-departure	More virtual training addressing these themes to build trust, understanding, and diplomacy among fellows.
	Leadership Development	Emphasize leadership training	Focus on stress management, inclusive leadership, and sustainable practices.
	Individual Appointments	Ensure support for professional appointments	Garner support from city coordinators in organizing fellows' individual appointments.
	Research and Hypothesis Projects	Integrate research questions	Encourage fellows to develop and explore personal or professional research questions.
	Program Themes	Integrate thematic elements	Align program themes with broader GMF goals and events such as Brussels Forum.
FELLOW PREPARATION AND ENGAGEMENT	Baseline Preparation	Establish pre-travel education and training	Ensure fellows are well prepared for their experiences abroad.
	Fellow Support	Provide socio-emotional support	Provide support, especially for fellows with family commitments.
COMMUNICATION & ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT	Transparency	Improve transparency	Clear communication about GMF's financial situation and program changes.

THEME	CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATIONS	DETAILS
	Alumni Involvement	Increase alumni involvement	Establish consistent communication channels with newsletters, local events, and town halls.
	Utilization of Alumni	Leverage alumni network	Engage alumni in program development and accountability.
	Broad Community Engagement	Conduct regular surveys and focus groups that include the entire community	Gathering alumni feedback is essential for a continuous improvement of the MMF program.
	In-Person and Virtual Events	Host GMF-sponsored in-person and virtual events	Foster better alumni engagement through regular programming.
	Communication Strategies	Enhance communication strategies	Improve internal and increase frequency of external communication to raise awareness about the program and its achievements. Establish robust mechanisms for tracking and engaging alumni post-programming. This includes better storytelling and showcasing the program's successes to stakeholders.
	Alumni Database	Create and maintain a searchable alumni database	Facilitate connections and collaborations by areas of expertise.
FINANCIAL STABILITY AND FUNDING	Sustainable Funding	Develop sustainable funding strategies	Engage alumni and stakeholders to identify innovative and sustainable funding sources.
	Alumni Leadership Council	Relaunch and strengthen the role of the Alumni Leadership Council	Organize events, conferences, and funding drives.
	Regional Expansion	Explore expanding the MMF program	Consider expanding the MMF program into regions beyond the

THEME	CRITERIA	RECOMMENDATIONS	DETAILS
			traditional transatlantic scope.
	Stable Funding	Secure stable funding	Increase funding and hire more dedicated staff to address resource constraints. This will enable better management of the program and more effective alumni engagement.
IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION	Clear Goals and Evaluation Methods	Utilize the MEL plan to measure impact and success	Implement clear goals and methods to measure the program's impact. This includes establishing evaluation criteria and regularly assessing outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.

IV. Key Findings

Program Goals and Impact: MMF's mission—to foster the next generation of transatlantic leaders—remains a consistently important goal. There was clear consensus about a reappraisal of this and other program goals given today's global environment.

Structure and Format: Diverse opinions existed on program length and structure. Some discussants believed that the program should be longer and more immersive, while others believed it should be shorter, with greater frequency to maintain momentum and interest.

Diversity and Inclusion: A continued emphasis on diversity in the program was strongly felt. Discussants suggested broader recruitment strategies and increased intentionality in choosing fellows so that a plethora of experiences and political views was represented.

Content and Curriculum: There was great support for designing a curriculum that deals with contemporary global issues, especially those related to racial dynamics and cultural competency. Discussants called for more relevant and challenging content that aligns with global realities.

Support and Training: Discussants favored more comprehensive pre-program training and requested continuous support throughout the fellowship program.

Participant Experience: Strengthening fellows' personal and professional development remained a key program component for all discussants. Where possible, the program should be tailored to fellows' individual experiences and focus on inter-cultural learning and leadership skill development.

MMF Networking and Collaboration: Networking opportunities throughout the program were considered a crucial element. More structured networking events and collaborative projects were recommended to improve connections among fellows.

Administrative Support: Discussants requested improved transparency and communication from program administrators, and recommended clear decision-making processes and more inclusion in program development.

Alumni Involvement: There was an overwhelming desire to increase alumni involvement. Periodic alumni gatherings and opportunities through which alumni can continue to participate in the program's development and fundraising were among the suggestions for accomplishing this.

Funding and Sustainability: The program's financial sustainability was another key takeaway. Suggestions for ensuring such sustainability included using the alumni network to help finance activities, searching for new funding models, and more staff dedicated to fundraising and program implementation.

V. Conclusion

The MMF program is a dynamic and tangible manifestation of GMF, bringing its mission and values to life in a compelling way. GMF is dedicated to strengthening transatlantic cooperation with a focus on addressing global challenges through collaboration and mutual understanding. The MMF program exemplifies this mission by facilitating exchanges between emerging leaders from Europe and the United States. Through the program's immersive experience, participants gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's perspectives, thereby directly supporting GMF's mission.

Leadership development is a core aspect of GMF's strategy, and the organization invests heavily in preparing future leaders to navigate complex global issues. The MMF program is a cornerstone of this effort, offering comprehensive leadership training, professional development opportunities, and exposure to critical transatlantic issues. This preparation enhances fellows' capacities and aligns perfectly with GMF's goal of cultivating leaders who can advance transatlantic cooperation and address global challenges effectively.

The organization is deeply **committed to the protection of democratic principles and the promotion of human rights worldwide**. The MMF program integrates these values into its curriculum, encouraging fellows to engage with democratic institutions and understand the importance of civil society. By fostering a deep appreciation for inclusive governance, MMF ensures that its participants are equipped with the skills to lead with values that underpin inclusive leadership.

MMF's structure and implementation are designed to reflect GMF's standards of excellence. The curriculum is meticulously crafted to balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills, ensuring that it remains relevant to contemporary global challenges. Regular updates to the curriculum will ensure that it addresses current issues such as climate change, inclusive leadership skills, cross-cultural understanding, and social justice. **The continuous pursuit of relevance in the MMF program demonstrates its embodiment of GMF's commitment to high-quality, impactful education.**

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of GMF's model, providing fellows with practical knowledge and firsthand exposure to policymaking processes. The MMF program excels in this area by organizing visits to key institutions and offering cultural immersion activities. These experiences deepen fellows' understanding of transatlantic relations and global policy issues, mirroring GMF's approach to hands-on, immersive education.

Building robust networks is essential for GMF's broader mission. The Leadership Program supports this strategy by organizing long-term professional development and networking opportunities. These efforts create a strong, active community of transatlantic leaders who can collaborate on shared professional opportunities, furthering GMF's goal of building a cohesive and collaborative network with continuous measurable impact.

GMF's approach to MEL is characterized by a commitment to quality and continuous improvement. By integrating the aforementioned recommendations for MMF and employing performance indicators and continuous evaluation processes, the leadership programs team ensures that the program remains effective, adaptable, and aligned with GMF's high standards.

The MMF program is indispensable to GMF, embodying the organization's mission and serving as its most visible and impactful initiative. GMF without MMF would lack a crucial component that drives its success and reputation. GMF's sustained success and relevance hinge on continued and increased investment in the MMF program. **To maintain its stature and efficacy, GMF must prioritize MMF, ensuring it receives the necessary resources and support to thrive and evolve.**

MMF participants universally acknowledge the program's transformative impact, particularly its role in broadening perspectives, enhancing professional networks, and deepening understanding of global issues. The MMF program stands at a critical juncture where it must adapt to new challenges while maintaining its core values and mission. The feedback gathered from stakeholders highlights the program's strengths and provides a roadmap for enhancements. By embracing flexibility, fostering diversity, and leveraging technology, the MMF program can continue to produce leaders who are well equipped to navigate and shape the complexities of transatlantic relations.

In conclusion, the MMF program has a robust foundation and a clear vision. With strategic adjustments and continuous improvement, it will continue to inspire and empower future generations of leaders dedicated to fostering strong democratic values and effective transatlantic collaboration. **Investing in MMF is not just an investment in a program; it is an investment in the future of GMF itself**, ensuring that the organization remains a leading force in promoting transatlantic understanding and cooperation.