

AIFS ABROAD

JANUARY 2021

PLAN OF ACTION FOR ACCESS, INCLUSION, DIVERSITY & EQUITY



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WELCOME

Over the past several years we have been changing a lot at AIFS Abroad. We've been engaging in important conversations about identity, power, and privilege. We have witnessed the continued inequity and systemic racism in the U.S. and have been evaluating, as a staff, the ways in which we can have a positive influence on creating a more just world. We have been reflecting on who we are now as an organization and who we want to be in the future. This document is our commitment to all of you. We commit to creating a more supportive and inclusive environment for program participants and staff. We commit to continually reviewing all our systems to see where we need to improve and get to work on making those changes a reality. We commit to doing this work now and in the long term.

Starting in 2021, under the new leadership of Emily Merson, AIFS Abroad now encompasses Global Experiences internships in addition to AIFS study abroad and customized programs. There is a new energy and awareness at AIFS and in the field of international education about the opportunity we have to make a difference in our community and the world. We are connecting as a global team in ways we have never done before and are stronger for it.

AIFS Chairman and CEO Bill Gertz recently formed an organization-wide Diversity Task Force to ensure that AIFS policies, processes, language, and programming fully embrace and promote diversity of all kinds. We are committed to having a staff that reflects the increasingly diverse population in the US, and to closing gaps in the hiring, recruiting, and retention of staff of diverse backgrounds. We will expand our scholarship programs to promote access and leadership for students from marginalized backgrounds, especially for those with the greatest financial need.

This plan of action is a work in progress – there can and will be changes based on our continued reflections, observations, actions, and feedback from everyone we work with and serve. It is our hope that by clearly and transparently sharing our organizational Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIDE) goals, we will demonstrate to everyone — students, families, staff, university and internship partners, alumni, and the field of international education — that these are our core values and hold priority.

We know that this work is never finished and that our actions will speak louder than any words offered in this document. Our progress will be reviewed quarterly and the plan will be updated annually. We will share our progress with you – both victories and the areas where we are still improving. We will hold ourselves accountable for making strides related to AIDE and ask you to do so as well. We open up this process to collaborative communication with all our key stakeholders. You can always reach out to me with your questions, comments, or ideas at alumni@aifs.com.

Sincerely,
Angela Manginelli
Vice President of Alumni and Inclusion Initiatives, AIFS Abroad

GOALS FOR THIS DOCUMENT

The goal of this document is to give us a **clear focus** on our **organizational priorities** related to **Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIDE)** for the year ahead. As access, inclusion, diversity, and equity are multidisciplinary considerations, our plan focuses on six areas which encompass the entirety of the education abroad experience:

Communications, Policies, Processes, Programs, Resources, and Staff & Training. Definitions for each of these themes can be found on page six of this document. We recognize there are additional actions that need to be taken, but we view these as the most essential to tackle first. Future iterations of this document will have updated action items as goals are met.

We will continue working closely with our colleagues at institutions across the U.S. to implement and expand upon these goals. Increased engagement and collaboration with colleagues at **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)** and **Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)** will be instrumental to our success. These partnerships play a crucial role in increasing student and faculty diversity as well as supporting AIFS Abroad and our programs.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We have determined corresponding measures of success, established checkpoints, and a timeline of completion for each goal to mark progress that is being made on these fronts. As we believe **transparency and accountability** in this work is important, along the way we will provide updates of our progress on the AIFS Abroad website, www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion.

Every few months staff working with each goal will review our efforts and publish updates to the website on how each goal is progressing. Every **December**, this document will be updated to **integrate successes, developments, lessons, and advances** from the previous version.

While global events can impact our programs and progress we have set these initial targets and will **focus our efforts on the areas that are achievable within given circumstances**. In cases where we are not on track to meet a goal by the **established timeline**, we will provide the steps that we will take to correct and, when necessary, provide an updated timeline.

You can send your feedback, questions, and ideas to Angela Manginelli, Vice President of Alumni & Inclusion Initiatives at alumni@aifs.com.

AIFS ABROAD

AN OVERVIEW

AIFS Abroad is one of nine divisions with the American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS). The division includes AIFS study abroad, customized programs, and Global Experiences internships offering responsive design and new collaborative opportunities for our university partners and students. We work with more than 400 affiliate institutions in the U.S. to help college students (domestic and international) to go abroad.

Students can choose from more than 70 comprehensive study abroad programs spanning more than 20 countries offered during the semester, academic year, summer or January term. In addition to study abroad options, students can participate in a Global Experiences internship in 17 global cities or virtually worldwide. Internships are available for a summer or semester and can be full or part time. Participants have the option of receiving credit for their internship experience.

CliftonStrengths and coaching, which have been a feature of Global Experiences internships, will be added to all AIFS summer and semester study abroad programs in 2021. Global Experiences award winning Green Initiative, which aims to make AIFS Abroad carbon neutral by 2025, will be expanded to all AIFS Abroad programs starting in 2021.

OUR STUDENTS

Many of the students who participate on our programs are going abroad for the first time. Although we have historically asked applicants for demographic information, it has been optional and most students have not provided. We have adjusted how we ask for this on our application so we can better assess how our outreach efforts are impacting student participation and will provide updates of this information on our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion).

OUR BELIEFS

AIFS Abroad denounces racism, white supremacy, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, genderism, and any actions, activities, and systems that seek to oppress individuals of diverse backgrounds. We believe that international exchange allows participants to learn from and about cultures and experiences outside of oneself. This time of self-reflection, growth, and exchange of ideas makes the world a richer and more empathetic place. We are committed to doing everything in our power to dismantle any of our own systems, policies, and practices that are contrary to these ideals.

OUR FOUNDATIONS

Since 1964, more than 1.6 million students have changed the way they see their world by studying abroad with the American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS), one of the oldest, largest and most trusted cultural exchange organizations in the world. Learn more about all our program offerings at www.aifs.com.

OUR MISSION

To provide the highest quality educational and cultural exchange programs to enrich the lives of young people throughout the world.

OUR VISION

We bring the world together®

OUR GOALS

- Promote students' curiosity and intellectual growth through high-quality academic programming which utilizes the host country & culture as context
- Promote cross-cultural learning and increased understanding through both academic and extra-curricular events and activities focused on the interaction with the host culture
- Increase opportunity and access to study abroad programs for students from diverse backgrounds
- Facilitate students' self-awareness of their own culture by providing opportunities to compare and contrast cultural differences
- Enhance students' personal growth, including qualities such as independence, confidence, self-reliance, curiosity and willingness to be in new and different surroundings and environments
- Contribute to students' career and professional development by exposure to different fields of study and work, encouraging the development of skills sought by employers, and helping them to identify and articulate the applicable knowledge and skills acquired by studying abroad

PLAN OF ACTION OVERVIEW

THEMES

We have broken our plan of action into six themes which encompass the entirety of the education abroad experience. Each theme contains three to four goals for the year ahead which will serve as the primary focus for our work. Each theme will be viewed through the lens of access, inclusion, diversity, and equity when put into daily practice.

- **Communications:** This theme includes any contact we have with any AIFS Stakeholder — students, families, staff, university and internship partners, faculty, alumni, and the field of international education — as well as any publications, websites, and social media channels.
- **Policies:** This theme speaks to the internal and external choices and rules made about how the division operates.
- **Processes:** This theme covers the series of actions or steps we take (internally and externally) to actualize our programs and operations.
- **Programs:** This theme includes the education abroad and internship programs themselves (virtual and in-person) as well as programming we offer for university and internship partners and alumni.
- **Resources:** This theme includes any programming, information, videos, blogs, or content that is created to assist our partners, students and their families throughout the education abroad and internship experience.
- **Staff & Training:** This theme focuses on internal and behind-the-scenes work we do to ensure our staff are prepared to facilitate programs and support all students.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

These are tasks and projects that are currently under way and we anticipate will be completed or fully implemented before the next version of the plan.

As these are finished, they will move into the representative accomplishments to date section.

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Representative accomplishments are things we have done in the past few years to take steps toward being more equitable, inclusive, diverse and accessible. If you have any questions or want to know more about our themes, goals, works in progress, and/or accomplishments to date, please reach out to Angela Manginelli, Vice President of Alumni & Inclusion Initiatives at alumni@aifs.com.

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

DEFINITIONS

ACCESS

Equitable access allows any individual who wishes to pursue it, to benefit from an education abroad or internship experience without limitations due to their identity. It means approaching systems and programming with the lens of belonging in mind. Access requires the availability of information related to education abroad and communicating programming and resources offered to all stakeholders (e.g., students, their families, faculty, organizational staff). Financial access, including information on funding sources and grant/scholarship availability, is another key piece of equitable access.

INCLUSION

The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, internships, co-curricular activities, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to all aspects of human difference, social identities, and social group differences, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religion/spirituality, age, ability, cognitive considerations/learning differences, military/veteran status, political perspective, associational preferences, and lived experiences that can be engaged in learning and working together.

EQUITY

Equity refers to fairness and impartiality in how individuals are treated. In the context of education abroad and internships, equity requires that students' identities are considered to be a central component to their international experience. Where diversity focuses on differences, inclusion focuses on climate, equity centers on whether or not the quality of the education abroad experience is fair for all students (e.g., they have access to similar quality programs, experiences result in learning outcomes proportional to the student's knowledge and competencies prior to going abroad). Equal treatment results in equity only if everyone starts with equal access to opportunities.

Our definitions were adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Making Excellence Inclusive website (n.d.); Portland Community College's Mission Priority Terminology; The University of Iowa's Excellence Through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan; and Diversity Abroad's Global Equity; and Inclusion Guidelines and Assessment (2nd ed, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

We identified our organizational priorities related to Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (AIDE) through internal and external conversations, open staff forums, and group discussions. Surveys were completed by all AIFS Abroad staff, our Board of Academic Advisors, and our Alumni Ambassadors. The data received through these avenues informed the direction taken by the AIFS Abroad Diversity & Inclusion Working Group which was responsible for the creation and review of this plan of action.

We want to keep our framework user-friendly, student-focused, and grounded in theory. We used the following models, theories, and resources in the development of this document and our practices:

- Diversity Abroad's Global Equity & Inclusion Guidelines for Education Abroad (2nd ed., 2019)
- Forum on Education Abroad's Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (6th ed., 2020)
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusive Excellence Initiative from the Association of American Colleges and Universities
- On-going staff participation in trainings offered by Diversity Abroad
- The Campus Racial Climate Model
- The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Project_
- Sanford's Theory of Challenge and Support
- Perry's Model of Cognitive Development
- "The Racial Healing Handbook" by Annelise A. Singh
- How to Be Antiracist" by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi
- "Survival Strategies for Going Abroad: A Guide for People with Disabilities" by Laura Hershey
- "Building Cultural Competence" edited by Kate Berardo and Darla K. Deardorff
- "Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad" edited by Heather Barclay Hamir and Nick Gozik
- Tony Ruth's visual summary on Inequality, Equality?, Equity, and Justice from the Design in Tech Report 2019 | Section 6 | Addressing Imbalance

COMMUNICATIONS

OUR GOALS

1. Create AIDE-focused mission, vision, and values for AIFS Abroad, a division of the American Institute For Foreign Study. The mission, vision, and values found on page 03 of this document are for AIFS as an organization and not division specific
2. Continued and increased representation of and information for students from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds in all AIFS Abroad marketing, program materials, publications, and website
3. Provide staff the option to include their pronouns in AIFS Abroad staff email signatures
4. Create videos for our YouTube channel covering topics of diversity, identity, and / or specific concerns of diverse students that are focused on program selection and pre-departure phases

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Providing information about AIFS Abroad in Spanish for students and families. Including Google translate button on website to allow for content to be viewed in multiple languages
- Having site-specific information for each program location related to social identities and access accommodations on website
- Redesigning pre-departure programming to be more inclusive for students of diverse backgrounds
- Providing all students with information on navigating reentry shock related to their social identities

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Crafted and added information on mental health and wellness, access, and social identities to pre-departure handbooks
- Added frequently asked questions (FAQ) section to parents' and families' area of the website and created new student FAQ section of the website
- Updated language on Alumni Ambassador program website and in promotional materials encouraging students of diverse backgrounds to apply. Indicated that one of the main focuses of the Ambassador program is to increase outreach and support to students of diverse backgrounds who are historically underrepresented in education abroad participation

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

POLICIES

GOALS

1. Create internal written policy for AIFS Abroad staff on how to address and report student feedback of discrimination/harassment in classroom, in instruction (teaching), in internships, in homestay environment, and in engagements with any professional staff
2. Create multiple ways for participants to report experienced or witnessed discrimination/harassment (from other program participants, host families, staff, instructors, or at their internship) throughout their experience with AIFS Abroad. Include the ways to report in the pre-departure handbooks and at on-site orientation
3. Create standardized policy on how we support students of diverse backgrounds in AIFS Abroad housing (including adult students, students who are transgender, and students with mobility considerations)
4. Create a discretionary funds policy for AIFS Abroad staff to make reasonable accommodations for students on-site

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Encouraging AIFS Abroad staff and Alumni Ambassadors to engage with TRIO program offices, Multicultural Offices, Disability Services, First-Gen Centers, and LGBTQIA+ Centers at partner institutions in the U.S.
- Redesigning and standardizing student housing form and homestay intake form for families across all program locations through lens of access and inclusion. Add question to housing form asking "do you have any considerations or accommodations of which we should be aware?"
- Asking for preferred name (if different from legal name) on application

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Crafted and added inclusion statement to all AIFS Abroad catalogs, applications, the AIFS Abroad student portal, acceptance materials, pre-departure handbooks, and marketing communications
- Updated AIFS Abroad Standards to include specific goals and language on diversity and inclusion (https://www.aifsabroad.com/advisors/pdf/aifs_standards.pdf)
- Added grants to students who receive the G.I. Bill, Boren, Gilman, and Fund for Education Abroad scholarships

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

PROCESSES

OUR GOALS

1. Increase opportunities through the application and pre-departure process for a student to disclose any aspects of their identities and considerations that they wish to share with us in order to best serve them abroad
2. Collect demographic information (including first gen and Pell Grant eligibility) on applicants and accepted students so we can measure progress in recruiting more students from underrepresented backgrounds
3. Provide opportunity in alumni exit survey for participants to provide feedback on their experiences related to diversity and inclusion

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Conducting staff review of curriculum - including AIFS Abroad Global Centers and host universities to ensure diversity in source materials
- Increasing opportunities for diversity in internships, co-curricular programming and excursions including local diversity, ethnically/racially diverse communities, faith affiliations, less affluent communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, regional diversity (urban, rural, suburban), and communities with physical and cognitive disabilities
- Conducting staff review of co-curricular programming and excursions to see if we provide opportunities that are accessible to all students
- Adding non-binary gender option to AIFS Abroad application

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Created accommodation forms for students to indicate any considerations that would impact their participation in the education abroad experience and formalized process for reviewing accommodation requests (forms were for students with the following considerations: Autism / Autism Spectrum, Blind / Low Vision, Systematic or Chronic Health Condition, Deaf / Hard of Hearing, Learning Disability / ADHD, Mental Health Disability, and Physical Disability)
- Conducted two surveys on AIDE at all program locations (in 2018 and 2020) to better understand access, possible accommodations, and climate for social identities in-country
- Served as beta-tester for Diversity Abroad's Global Equity and Inclusion Guidelines and Assessment (2nd Edition)

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

PROGRAMS

GOALS

1. Create spaces for facilitated discussions on social identity and reflection sessions in country and in virtual programming with AIFS Abroad staff
2. Add questions for on-site focus groups related to identity to better understand the experiences of underrepresented students abroad
3. Provide opportunities pre-departure for students to consider their social identities and how they will be impacted while abroad
4. Expand drive-in or virtual workshops for our university and internship partners on topics related to diversity and inclusion

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Creating and offering student workshops/virtual information sessions on navigating social identities abroad (when possible, sessions are recorded and added to AIFS Abroad YouTube channel)
- Adding prompts on diversity / inclusion / social identities to “Marketing Your International Experience” and “Maximizing Study Abroad” workbooks
- Having on-site staff conduct program run-through with attention to accommodations that students may require and focus on finding solutions to increase accessibility for all to participate

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Offer phone-based or online mental health counseling options for participants in every program location
- Diversified program offerings (ex: Conflict Transformation and Social Justice; Black London, LGBTQ+ Europe: History, Culture and Community; Herstory: Leading Women in the U.K. and Ireland; Social Justice Movements; and Contours of the Caribbean, Barbados)
- Spend time during Alumni Ambassador training and throughout program for students to unpack their study abroad experience through the lenses of social identities and skills built
- Developed "Navigating Uncertainty" guide, video, and small group discussion series which invites participants to consider different prompts (identity, political views, career goals, contribution to society, feelings on home, relationship with time, personal style, views on poverty, the role of family, and global view) and think about how they were before they went abroad, while they were abroad, and how they are/want to be following the experience abroad

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

RESOURCES

OUR GOALS

1. Provide students with budgeting and financial planning resources, cost of living information abroad, and information on how to navigate the financial aid processes on campus
2. Add more understandable language and resources to our website on CISI insurance coverage options and limitations
3. Offer advising, pre-departure discussions, and resources to students preparing them for experiencing stereotypes or discrimination in host culture. Share resources with university and internship partners.
4. Create toolkit for customized faculty-led program leaders related to diversity and inclusion, including information on social identities, group dynamics, and outreach strategies for reaching diverse students

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Having CISI insurance documents available in Spanish for students whose families include non-native English speakers
- Adding additional resources to the website and on-site related to supporting mental health while abroad
- Synthesizing the social identity information from our pre-departure materials to include on program location pages of our website. This will help prospective students make informed decisions based on which resources and accommodations are available in each location and how their social identities might be received abroad
- Providing information on athletics/healthy living under the living abroad section of the website with information on athletic/practice facilities, fresh food markets, sport or dance classes/teams, parks, etc.

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Developed and updated Student Resources and FAQ website (<https://www.aifsabroad.com/student-resources.asp>)
- Created social identity handouts which feature information on accessibility, adult students, first gen, LGBTQIA+, race and ethnicity, veterans, and studying abroad as a woman
- Provide opportunities for students of diverse background to connect with peers considering study abroad through our Ask Alumni & Alumni Ambassador programs
- Increased funding for marginalized students through U.S. Veterans Grant, Fund for Education Abroad, and Gilman scholarship match

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

STAFF & TRAINING

GOALS

1. Review hiring and contracting practices and criteria to ensure that the process includes only job-related factors and qualifications, and is free from criteria that could have an unlawful adverse impact upon any person or group
2. Train staff on avoidance of discrimination, implicit or explicit
3. Train relevant staff on responding to complaints of discrimination and situations that may involve, or could be reasonably perceived to involve, discriminatory actions or omissions
4. Train relevant staff on most effective advising of culturally diverse persons

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- Identifying and featuring opportunities for staff to attend conferences and training workshops focused on diversity and inclusion in international education
- Discussing how to use gender-inclusive language and understand impact of gendered language use when addressing groups of students
- Determining how on-site staff can facilitate activities and discussions related to social identity to increase accessibility for all to participate

REPRESENTATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- Continue biweekly conversations with student-facing staff on topics related to Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (facilitated by staff and external professionals)
- Provide access to Diversity Abroad's member resources for all AIFS Abroad staff
- Staff attended and presented at conferences, workshops, seminars, and virtual events focused on AIDE in the U.S. and abroad

MEASURES & ACCOUNTABILITY

Visit our website (www.aifsabroad.com/inclusion) to see the measures and accountability for all our AIDE goals.

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"My commitment is to ensure that AIFS embraces this initiative. Keeping AIDE as a priority is critical to our success and our goal toward a more culturally aware world that is inclusive of all people."

Bill Gertz, Chairman and CEO, AIFS

"My goal is to help turn our AIDE plan into action and execution through the AIFS Abroad strategy plans. I will work with our HR department and Diversity & Inclusion Working Group to help develop a new talent and recruitment program that better represents the diverse nature of our field and our country. I acknowledge anti-Black racism and structural inequalities continue to be barriers to education abroad and will review all existing AIFS Abroad and Global Experiences policies and procedures with an equity lens and make changes as needed. Last, but not least, I commit to increasing scholarships that is focused on greater participation for students under represented in international education."

Emily Merson, Executive Director, AIFS Abroad

"In the year ahead I will continue to educate myself and increase my awareness of the structural inequalities that impact minoritized communities and act as barriers to study abroad. As a white woman, I acknowledge my privilege and commit to using my power as a Director of AIFS to bring about meaningful change within the organization. As the person who supervises the on-site program staff, my priority for 2021 is to review our recruitment practices and develop strategies to increase the diversity of applicants and hire people of color. I also commit to continuing the thorough review of all aspects of AIFS programming to increase opportunities for diversity in co-curricular activities, course offerings and materials."

Ailsa Brookes, Senior Vice President, AIFS Abroad

"I will continue to use my agency and position of power within my organization to challenge leadership and policies that could be more inclusive. As a white, first-generation college student, cisgender, heterosexual, neurotypical, able-bodied woman I understand that in a lot of spaces I am currently in the majority. I will use my positionality of privilege to advocate for systemic changes to increase access and opportunities for those who are minoritized. I will continue to seek out and work with individuals with varied and marginalized identities to ensure we are being as inclusive and equitable as possible. My role allows me the occasion to work with our students, their families, our university partners and our staff around the globe, and I see myself as a bridge for these audiences. I will keep educating myself and be willing to engage in uncomfortable discussions with those in my sphere of influence."

Angela Manginelli, Vice President of Alumni & Inclusion Initiatives, AIFS Abroad

"In my continuing role as a member of the AIFS Board of Directors I will actively support this plan of action, helping to ensure leadership recognizes the importance of keeping it at the forefront of our Organization's priorities. We have made strides in our efforts to be more diverse and inclusive, but there is much more to be accomplished. With a focused commitment we will achieve our goals."

Paul Watson, Executive Director Emeritus, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"I commit to continue to support the AIFS Study Abroad initiative by marketing to and representing all student, parent, Advisor and Faculty audiences. In the upcoming year, I commit to enhancing our site to being ADA compliant, and enhancing access to more populations via translated content. I am proud to be part of an organization that has a forward-thinking plan to support this AIDE initiative."

Kim Fleming Balkun, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing, AIFS

"For 2021 I will continue to educate myself on all aspects of Access, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity to better support, not only our student population, but also the many different populations where we run programs. On an operational level I will review our program sites to make sure that, where possible, the courses and/or activities offered to students reflect the diversity of that city or country, and that as an organization we also support minoritized communities in these locations."

Kirsty Isherwood, Vice President, AIFS Study Abroad

"My role at AIFS Abroad has me responsible for program advising processes for our students and liaising with our overseas colleagues on the delivery of successful AIFS and Global Experience programs. I will work to see that underrepresented voices are heard and reflected in our processes, guidance and training documents, in our on-the-ground activities, and conversations. I also commit to continuing my own education on issues related to Access, Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity so that I personally embody the values and outwardly reflect them."

Carri Orrison, Vice President of Program Operations, AIFS Abroad

"I commit to continuing my support for inclusive and diverse AIFS programs, starting with ensuring that marketing and enrollment strategy and processes allow for our programs to be as inclusive and equally accessible as possible. Specifically, I will work with colleagues in marketing, IT, and programming to review the application and enrollment process in order to remove barriers to completion. I will continually educate myself on diverse and inclusive hiring processes in order to increase diversity and diverse thought internally."

Augusta Viccellio, Vice President of Enrollment and Marketing, AIFS Abroad

"As the leader of the University Relations team I will actively seek out and share resources related to diverse student populations in an effort to increase our knowledge as a team and identify gaps in our experience. As an individual I will work to continually flag and investigate my own biases and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups in our outreach and communications."

Kelly M. Holland, Vice President, Institutional Partnerships, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"As the Director of Human Resources, I vow to ensure that our policies, procedures and actions embody A.I.D.E. One person cannot take on the responsibility of fulfilling this mission. We are a team and our collective efforts will make a difference. The world is ever-changing and we must learn to adapt and welcome everything that comes along with it. This year we'll provide some basic training to employees to bring more awareness to our diverse world. I proudly support this mission and the efforts of everyone involved."

Nydia Reyes, Director of Human Resources, AIFS

"As the only representative from an HBCU on the BOAA, at Howard University, we are committed to sharing the voices of the HBCU community with AIFS to celebrate, challenge, and support AIDE-related actions made by AIFS from year to year. We are committed to being a sounding board, source of academic support, and partner along this journey to social justice for all, domestically and abroad."

Maraina (Raina) Montgomery, Assistant Director, Study Abroad, Howard University

"I believe that all students should have a clear path to studying abroad and to the life-changing benefits of an international experience. In the year ahead, I plan to help advance AIDE at AIFS by continuing to provide the university perspective. We must address the challenges students face, and I fully support the goals that AIFS has set forth for the organization and for comprehensively supporting students throughout their journey."

Dr. Lisa Loberg, Director of Study Abroad, Loyola Marymount University

"I am lucky to work in London, one of the most diverse cities in the world. While this forms part of the reasoning behind many students making London their study abroad location, not all of our students fully appreciate the city's diversity and inclusivity. I plan to work more closely with our faculty, ensuring that London's diversity is represented amongst our teaching staff and that, where relevant, the academic content of our courses helps educate students about London's cultural, ethnic and economic diversity."

Corinne Cohen, Program Director, AIFS London

"I pledge to continue to listen, to learn and to take myself out of my comfort zone as I engage in delivering our plan of action. Specifically I want to ensure that the activities and excursions offered on the programs I work on reflect the diversity of students that we want to attract to study abroad and the diversity of the culture students are engaging with."

Tori Monkman, Deputy Programme Director, AIFS Abroad

"I will talk with the University of Seville and the coordinators to try the professors to use a inclusive vocabulary teaching their classes, in Spanish or English. Also, to try to promote a local AIDE workshop, for students and professors."

Eduardo Padial Campón, Resident Director - Seville, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"First and foremost, I commit to educate myself through reading, research, and active listening to uncover my own bias blind spots and continue to deconstruct the systemic issues that have been ingrained within me. As an Asian, biracial, white-passing woman from an immigrant family, I also hope to be brave enough to speak up and use my experiences as an example to show others from similar backgrounds the potential within them and the possibilities that are open to them. I would like to use whatever platform I have to amplify the voices of the diverse students and universities that I work with and make sure that their stories, successes and struggles are heard and valued within our organization. Lastly, I acknowledge that often times, with growth comes pain and will work on being open and ready to have difficult and challenging conversations as we push for a more just and equitable world."

Michelle Walters, Regional Vice President, University Relations, AIFS Abroad

"Being a White, Catholic woman in Ireland I realize that I am in a majority in my society. In the coming year I am going to make a conscious effort to research more and educate myself in areas that I may not be that familiar with. As always I will continue to welcome everyone and make their stay here as seamless and enjoyable as possible. However, I will push myself further to explore more inclusive opportunities in my community, city, and country. The University of Limerick is very inclusive and constantly strives to broaden and enhance opportunities for our study abroad students. I will work closely with them to welcome and support our students."

Elaine Keane, Resident Director - Limerick, AIFS Abroad

"As Resident Director, I will continue to encourage, educate and equip students of all faiths and identities to reach their personal goals by striving to provide a secure, empathetic and tolerant environment in which students may grow in confidence, express themselves without fear of judgement and share their experiences as they develop an understanding and appreciation of the positive impact and diverse opportunities awarded by international communication and co-operation."

Miranda Rea, Resident Director - Grenoble, AIFS Abroad

"In all aspects of my work and as part of the AIFS community I will continue to behave in a way that actively supports the principles of AIFS and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion. I am a white cis-gender, heterosexual, able-bodied woman, I grew up in Ireland at a time when the environment I lived in, and my every day experience was not very visibly diverse. Through this I became aware of how important diversity and inclusivity are to fostering success for everyone. My role at AIFS allows me the opportunity to work with students and help them feel supported and empowered during their internship and study abroad experience. I am committed to individual and organizational efforts to build respect, dignity, fairness, equality and self-esteem and will continue to participate in professional development training which will specifically enhance my cultural competency. I will continue to develop, improve and/or modify materials so that they are accessible to all users."

Sinéad Sheehan, Academic/Internship Director, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"In the following year, I strive to educate myself on topics of intersectionality, to further my understanding of ableism and how I can help further access to our Berlin location on study abroad programs. I will be active in calling out ableist, sexist, racist and homophobic behavior in myself and others, and ask colleagues, students and friends to help me be accountable as well. I plan to have discussions with our university partners on how to provide a more inclusive learning environment, how to include more diverse voices in materials and teaching and what we can do to help students of marginalized groups feel welcome on campus. I will connect students and activist groups here in Berlin, once students are back on location."

Nele Thomsen, Resident Director - Berlin, AIFS Abroad

"The year ahead, I will continue to support, encourage and inspire all study abroad students whatever their personal identity, origins or creeds. My ambition will always be to facilitate international understanding and cooperation in a secure and tolerant environment. I will do this through talking about social identities in France, compiling and providing resources for minoritized students, conducting 1 to 1 and group conversations with students throughout the program and putting the students in contact with associations that may be relevant to them. I will carry on educating myself on diversity to be even more inclusive and to keep on positively impacting the life of each student participating in the Cannes program."

Sandrine Passeron, Resident Director - Cannes, AIFS Abroad

"Creating an inclusive program as a Resident Director is all about the actions and attitudes I take each day on the job. I endeavor to value and understand each student and do all that I can to support them and help them to feel empowered and confident. I will conduct research to have a list of resources and organizations in Salamanca for minoritized students to connect with during their time abroad and will check in with each student 1:1 during their program to make sure they feel supported. It doesn't matter where a student is coming from, who they are, how they identify, their story - I am committed to making sure each feels welcomed, respected, supported, included, valued, and treated with fairness."

Gaye Michaels, Resident Director - Salamanca, AIFS Abroad

"I will use my position as Prague's Resident Director to continue promoting Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity throughout all Prague programs. I believe that the inclusion of underrepresented and minoritized students can be strengthened by creating specific situations where our program students can interact with similar local social groups. To enable this process, I will use a platform based on our volunteering options, including workshops with visually impaired students and physically disabled students from the schools with special needs, organizing sports events, and themed craft workshops with Sinti/Roman children from the Prague Parents shelter. Only through understanding of each other needs, we can create a fairer and more inclusive world."

Renata Slunečková, Resident Director, Prague, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"In the next year, I plan to help facilitate meaningful interaction between the AIFS team and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at my school. Doing so will better engage systemically non-dominant students on our campus in study abroad opportunities, and will also help AIFS better understand and meet systemically non-dominant student needs -- which it clearly and genuinely wants to do as illustrated in this action plan."

Ben Iverson, Director of International Programs & Enrollment, Augustana University

"As a white, able-bodied man, I recognize my privilege. More importantly, I understand that ending discrimination of all types, largely falls upon myself and others that look like me. I am thrilled that AIFS Abroad is bringing inclusion initiatives in international education to the forefront and excited to be a part of it. I commit to the ongoing work of listening, learning, and helping change the trajectory of the past, both as an employee of AIFS Abroad as well as personally. I pledge to help students from diverse backgrounds and needs feel comfortable to discuss any questions or issues they may have regarding their inclusion on our programs with me. I will also ensure they know about and have easy access to our diversity resources."

Justin R. Lee, Admissions Officer, AIFS Abroad

"I plan to continue educating myself on the diverse population we serve on site and being more mindful of using appropriate language when speaking to groups of students and individuals."

Jenny Pena, Deputy Resident Director - Prague, AIFS Abroad

"In the year ahead, in my work, working directly with interns as they attempt to expand their global knowledge and gain invaluable experience abroad, I plan to work on inclusion and advocate for systemic changes to allow access to our program to those who are marginalized. I will do this by reviewing our existing resources to determine gaps in information for participants on-site and work to find additional organizations or engagement opportunities for participants of diverse backgrounds. I would like to ensure anyone who does one of our programs feels that we are inclusive, equitable, and interested in bettering the lives of each and every intern."

Rachel Vermiglio Smith, Director of Italy Programs, Global Experiences

"Within my role, I am committed to learning from others in order to understand the things that I do not know as a white woman. I will do this through seeking out 1:1 conversations with individuals of diverse backgrounds and engaging with content created by individuals with marginalized identities. I want to assist in making sure that AIFS has a seat at the table for everyone, and that all voices are heard when making decisions. I want to make sure that when we say "we bring the world together" that we need to recognize that in order to accomplish that, we truly need to have everyone involved in the conversations that we are having. I strive to hold my colleagues responsible, and I wish to be held responsible for my words and actions as well."

Susanna Shigo, Regional Director, University Relations, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"In my position as an educator and director of the Budapest program, while also coming from a historically targeted minority in my home country and living currently as an immigrant in a third country, I will use my privileged position to create points of access to individuals who come from marginalized and socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds while I integrate components of the program. I will keep educating myself about different points of view and about differing life experiences by stepping out of my comfort zone and outside of the echo chambers my daily consumption of news, social media and other cultural products built around me and try to communicate with and listen to those I disagree with the most, while I am executing my work as an educator and administrator, aiming to find common approaches to practical problems."

Dr. Deniz Bingöl Hall, Resident Director - Budapest, AIFS Abroad

"My goals in 2021 are: 1. To continue to work on customized faculty-led (CFL) programs targeted to non-traditional study abroad students including Technical and Vocational Education students at community colleges. 2. To expand my connections at the AIFS/CFL universities and colleges' student services departments who assist non-traditional study abroad students including TRIO, ACES, CalWorks, etc."

Paula Messina, University Relations for Customized, Faculty-Led programs, AIFS Abroad

"I will provide to my students more opportunities to learn, explore and discuss about Diversity and Inclusion through focus groups and workshops during their stay in Costa Rica. As well, organize activities taking on account ethnical and cultural differences where all students feel included and understood based on their differences and equality. I will continue encouraging my students to be critical thinkers to not only tolerate difference but celebrate it."

Karla Carballo, Resident Director - San José, AIFS Abroad

"I will continue to learn about people whose identities are different from my own, and will use my voice, agency, and position of privilege, within my position at AIFS, my participation in the AIFS Diversity Task Force and as a member of my community, to be an advocate. I will make a more concerted effort to increase outreach to schools that serve underrepresented students, including HBCUs, and specific offices on campuses, such as the offices of diversity and inclusion, to increase awareness of and access to education abroad."

Damien Marshall, Regional Vice President, Partnership Development, AIFS Abroad

"By living in a city like Barcelona, it gives me the opportunity to see, learn and feel the diversity of our world and the need for respect and consideration between cultures and people. My purpose is to implement all the knowledge acquired during [our bi-weekly staff AIDE] workshops in our programs in order to meet the diversity and cultural needs to make a safer and more open program in which there is room for each individual student, for integrity and acceptance."

Inma Arenas, Resident Director - Barcelona, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"Within my university relations role in the Mid-Atlantic, I specifically plan to prioritize conversations and outreach with HBCUs in my region to connect students with AIFS programming, scholarships, and planning resources and to solicit feedback to continuously improve our organization's initiatives. Overall, I will continue to educate myself, both personally and professionally, and use my position to elevate underrepresented voices and participation in study abroad."

Katie Ryan, Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President, University Relations, AIFS Abroad

"Utilizing my direct communication with students and their universities, I am focused on providing the tools and information for students to access funding. I am fortunate to be able to speak to students directly to identify their needs and provide advice on how to successfully plan and fund an international opportunity such as studying or interning abroad. However, there is always more work to be done and I believe I have a personal responsibility to maintain my knowledge on scholarships, financial aid and external funding opportunities. I am also focused on finding ways to help students alleviate costs, when possible."

Katherine Adams, Regional Enrollment Manager, AIFS Abroad

"I will use my position as lecturer and AIFS instructor to draw attention to inequalities and underrepresented groups, developing lesson plans to enhance inclusion and ensure that the voices of minority and disadvantaged groups - past, present and future - are heard and engaged with. I will use my privileged position to cultivate an inclusive and accessible classroom culture providing all students, particularly underrepresented groups, with a safe and empowering learning environment."

Nicole D'Adamo Moody, AIFS London British Life & Culture Instructor

"As a member of the newly formed AIFS Diversity Taskforce, I plan to work with my colleagues to examine holes in representation in the teams across the company and to identify ways to increase diversity and improve equity and inclusion at all levels of the organization. I will strive to engage in difficult discussions addressing these issues and to use my privilege to elevate and magnify the voices of the underrepresented and marginalized."

Larry Komrower, Program Manager, Global Experiences

"As a Regional Vice President of University Relations in the Northeast, I have the opportunity to use my public facing role to actively promote and share the wide ranging social-identity-related student resources that have been created and aggregated by our Diversity and Inclusion team. My personal goal to advance Access, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity at AIFS is to feature our Student Resources library in every advisor facing webinar and meeting in an effort to ensure that those resources reach a greater number of students, and can more proactively aid our partner institutions."

Maura Cassells, Regional Vice President, Northeast, AIFS Abroad

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"I will continue to foster a culture where every voice is welcome, heard and respected. I will do this through addressing topics related to AIDE (including race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality) throughout the on-site experience and invite students to engage in deeper dialogues about their identities and how they have been impacted through their time abroad."

Ingrid Schmidbauer-Stengel, Resident Director - Salzburg, AIFS Abroad

"I will continue to position myself within my organization to challenge policies and practices that could be more inclusive. I will use my positionality to educate others on topics like: privilege, microaggressions, implicit bias, gender dysphoria, et al. I will continue to use my professional role to empower all students throughout the various stages of their career development: resume building, interview skills, application advising, etc. I will never see my knowledge of these topics as complete and will continue educating myself. I will not be deterred by resistance and will continue to respectfully engage in uncomfortable discussions with those in my sphere of influence."

Karl Jacobs, Enrollment Manager, Global Experiences

"Being myself a first-generation student, not only going to the University but also studying abroad, definitely helped me to have a wider understanding of our students academics and personals' needs when arriving in Granada. However, as a white cisgender and heterosexual woman, I realized that I am currently in the majority. Though Granada has always been a very inclusive and tolerant city when talking about the LGTBIQ+ community, I commit myself in the year ahead, and making use of my position in AIFS as a Resident Director, to get a stronger relationship with local LGTBIQ+ associations and their activities in order to help our students in their personal growth when studying abroad."

Noelia Marín Muñoz, Resident Director - Granada, AIFS Abroad

"I will continue to be an advocate for the students that I work with to ensure that all are able to pursue an international experience regardless of their background, socioeconomic status, and any perceived limitations. Specifically, I will work to add the Student Resources page to the student portal and highlight it on each welcome call with a student. I will encourage them to connect with our program alumni to ask questions related to location and their social identities through our alumni LinkedIn group. I vow to keep an open mind with each student, partner, and stakeholder that I work with to make certain that they are heard, supported and valued."

Jen Mackin, Program Manager, Global Experiences

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"On an individual level, I will continuously strive to better understand the experiences of people whose realities differ from my own through empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence. I promise to actively listen and educate myself on issues of social justice. In my Partnership Development role at AIFS Abroad, I will consciously engage minority-serving institutions to increase my knowledge of the needs of their students, while supporting their missions and initiatives with the intention to create more inclusive programs and increase access and opportunity for all."

Melissa Buerkett, Regional Vice President, Partnership Development, AIFS Abroad

"I will use my position in international education to teach and lead by example on how to better our global community. As a brown Indian female that represents coming from an ethnic background, we as a community have come very far an example of this is Kamala Harris becoming the first female Black/Indian Vice President in the US. This is a remarkable day in history that shows humanity uniting together however this is not always the norm. My position allows me to interact with students, clients, employers, and colleagues from around the world embracing people from all walks of life and I commit to finding additional resources for students of diverse backgrounds to add to our pre-departure and on-site support materials and ensuring that all groups I work with in my role know of their availability. Working at GE I have met the kindest souls always helping and supporting whenever needed. It is great to see diversity as a universal topic, something that cannot be changed overnight but one small step is a step in the right direction."

Shaania Saini, London Placement Coordinator, Global Experiences

"I will use my role as an IT power user to develop an improved database where we can communicate and provide increased access to resources and support all students regardless from all social identities. I will use my specialized knowledge and expertise of our internal systems as well as my understanding of our processes to work with our IT division and create a new section in our student portal specifically designated for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity resources to provide students and families clear and easy access to these resources. I will work closely with leadership to make changes to our study abroad application and ensure application questions are inclusive and equitable and take into consideration all individuals and identities."

Rebecca Rankin, Admissions Officer, AIFS Abroad

"As an employee of AIFS I plan to advance AIDE by recognizing my own biases and creating, maintaining and promoting a supportive, respectful and diverse environment. Specifically, I will make sure to encourage every student I work with to connect with our alumni and direct them to our Student Resources website so they have additional information on funding and social identities that will help them as they prepare for going abroad."

Chelsea Conran, Enrollment Manager, Global Experiences

WHAT IS ONE THING IN THE YEAR AHEAD YOU PLAN TO DO TO ADVANCE AIDE AT AIFS?

"As the Sydney Program Director, I have the opportunity to impact the participant experience on the ground and seek out opportunities to better connect participants of diverse backgrounds to their experience in Australia. My goal for 2021 is to prospect for new employers where interns from diverse backgrounds thrive."

Andrea Hay, Sydney Director, Global Experiences

"As a student at the University of California, Berkeley and an AIFS Alumni Ambassador completing her second year as a member of the Alumni Ambassador Program, I have had the unique opportunity to promote study abroad in my community, at my university, and around the country. I will use my prior experience in these areas to promote diversity and inclusivity in study abroad both on my college campus and in the AIFS Alumni Ambassador Program. I will proactively seek out and support individuals with marginalized identities who are often unable to access study abroad opportunities. Additionally, I will serve as a mentor to my peers in the AIFS Alumni Ambassador Program and help them effectively reach out to and support underrepresented communities on their own campuses."

Alina Zarate, AIFS Alumni Ambassador

"I will actively support the AIDE initiative by working with staff to review hiring practices to remove any unconscious bias and ensure the process is equitable. I also commit to researching additional spaces to post open positions to ensure we have a diverse pool of applicants from which to select. I will continue in my role as part of AIFS to support and enable employees to develop in becoming their full selves. I plan to educate myself on the unfamiliar through new ideas and perspectives so that I am able to encourage and equip others to do the same."

Charlotte Mitchener, Human Resources Coordinator, AIFS

THANKS & CONTRIBUTORS

This document was crafted and reviewed by members of the AIFS Abroad staff in collaboration with members of our Board of Academic Advisors and AIFS Alumni Ambassadors. We continue to learn from and remain immensely grateful for everyone's contributions to this document. Their leadership, honesty, conversations, and guidance has made us better people and AIFS Abroad a better organization.

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