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**Authors:** Nick J. Gozik and Heather Barclay Hamir

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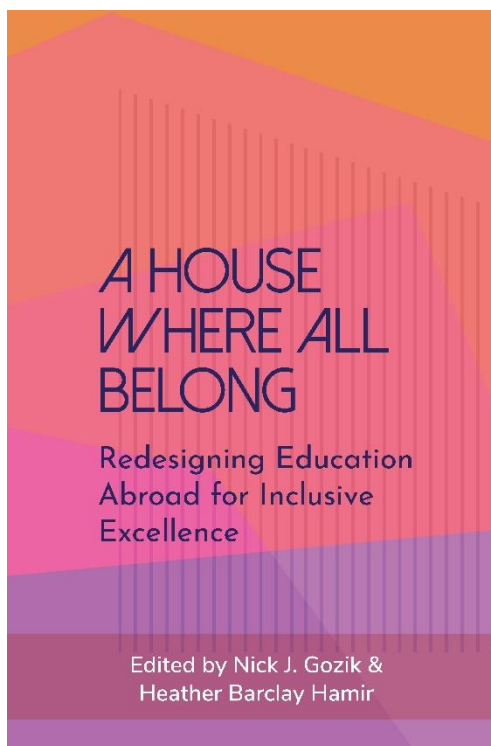
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# 1

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## Unpacking Education Abroad's Invisible Knapsack in the Pursuit of Inclusive Excellence

Nick J. Gozik and Heather Barclay Hamir

When we started working on this book, following the publication of *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad: A Handbook of Research and Practice* (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b), the world was a different place. Over the course of writing, in the U.S. alone, we have experienced a global health pandemic, a highly charged political divide in the run up to the 2020 elections, and the expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement catalyzed by the death of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police. Ongoing discussions and debates have likewise continued to evolve around topics such as gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities, with diverging views informed by various factors including politics, age, faith, and socioeconomic status. Rather than remaining lodged in one moment, this volume has evolved in lockstep with the world around us, and our sincere hope is that it will serve as a guide for those working to affect change in one area within a much broader landscape, that of education abroad.

Study abroad in the U.S. as we know it today emerged in the 1920s largely as an elite endeavor. In recent decades, overseas programming has become much more diverse, with participation of students from various backgrounds and academic interests; a much wider array of destinations; and a greater mix of activities abroad (e.g., study, research, community-based

learning, internships), hence the term “education abroad” in place of “study abroad.” *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad* explored strategies to expand participation among underserved groups, including first-generation students, students with disabilities, community college students, students of color, STEM majors/minors, and male-identifying students,<sup>1</sup> among others. At the same time, education abroad remains limited, with less than 3% of U.S. college students going abroad each year (Kim & Lawrence, 2021) and approximately 1 out of 10 who graduate with some sort of study abroad credit (Institute of International Education, 2020b). While few students study abroad overall, even fewer are students of color, as education abroad persistently enrolls a majority of White female students despite efforts toward greater inclusion.

Among the many inequities in the U.S. and other countries, why should we focus on this one? The answer to this question largely depends on how one understands the value of higher education (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b). When viewed as a public good (even for private institutions), much has to do with providing access to all members of a society, with notable benefits to both the society as a whole and individuals, for example, longer life spans, better access to health care, better dietary and health practices, greater economic stability and security, and more stable employment and greater job satisfaction (United Nations, n.d.). It also means that, once students are admitted, they have access to all programming and services available on a campus. If two students graduate with the same diploma, yet only one is able to participate in activities that enrich learning outside the classroom, technically both have the same degree, yet one is much better positioned for the workforce and civic life. This point is reaffirmed by Kuh’s research on student gains through high-impact practices (HIPs) including education abroad (Kuh, 2008; Kuh et al., 2017).

Equally important to the previous question is an appreciation of what steps need to be taken to address inequities that exist within higher education. Among U.S. scholars, there is a general consensus that change cannot take place without systematic and structural modifications; to simply amend

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<sup>1</sup>Our preference is to use “male-identifying” and “female-identifying,” with an understanding that gender is fluid and culturally constructed, with some individuals, for example, who may not identify with the gender that they were assigned at birth. For the sake of readability, we use “male” and “female” here. In subsequent chapters, data collection methods and gender response options vary, but are most likely based on self-reporting; accordingly, any time the terms “male” or “female” are used, it assumes male-identifying or female-identifying unless otherwise stated. If authors refer to gender in another way—e.g., when citing specific survey data with known methods—that will be explicitly referenced, e.g., assigned male at birth.

a policy or add a program may only offer a limited solution and not get at the root of the problem. In fact, this book stems from a deep concern that, as a profession, *education abroad has continued to operate largely without challenging the cultural core of who we are and what we do*. This is not because scholars and practitioners do not care. Many are genuinely committed to widening access, and as noted earlier, there has been real success. At the same time, we continue to operate with a dominant narrative written by White (and largely female) participants and a predominantly White profession. The question we must ask ourselves now is: *If education abroad had been originally designed for and by people of color or other minoritized communities, what assumptions would inform programming and how might programming differ from what we know today?*

This book accordingly is intended to move the field ahead, drawing on the momentum and heightened imperative for social change. If our first volume (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018c) examined strategies for increasing participation, this book looks at the *education abroad process*, from the time that students arrive on campus and begin considering going abroad, to when they go overseas, and upon their reentry. By taking a systematic approach, chapter authors critically examine our field's assumptions, policies and procedures, and types of programming to reconsider and reinterpret what the field offers.

This approach aligns with The Forum on Education Abroad's (The Forum) latest version of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (The Forum on Education Abroad, 2020), which includes a Guiding Principle on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). While the focus is largely on U.S. institutions and practices, it is written for anyone—including overseas resident staff and colleagues at global institutions—who works with students from U.S. universities and colleges engaged in education abroad. It also comes with an understanding that many of the themes explored here go well beyond U.S. borders and deal more generally with the universal question of how students from all backgrounds can best be supported.

## **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Amid a sea of terminology, it may seem that the words we use in talking about differences and how to negotiate them are unimportant. In fact, this could not be further from the truth. Words do matter and especially those we explore in this volume related to EDI. Here, we use terminology as developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), which has been adopted by a number of institutions, including The Forum. Falling

within the broader initiative of “Making Excellence Inclusive,” the AAC&U has defined these three terms, each of which stands on its own, while also coming together to form a whole:

**Diversity:** Individual differences (e.g., personality, prior knowledge, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

**Inclusion:** The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, 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.

**Equity:** The creation of opportunities for historically underserved populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion. (Association of American Colleges & Universities, n.d.)

A simple way of understanding this terminology comes from the chief diversity officer at the University of Michigan, Robert Sellers, who uses the metaphor of a dance to explain that: “diversity is where everyone is invited to the party; equity means that everyone gets to contribute the playlist; and inclusion means that everyone has the opportunity to dance” (University of Michigan, n.d.). Within higher education, it becomes clear that one cannot have inclusion or equity without also making sure that there are diverse faculty, staff, and students. At the same time, it is not sufficient to only hire diverse recruits or admit a diverse group of students; students need support and opportunities for inclusion once they are on campus, and campus or organizational culture must foster a sense of belonging for faculty and staff as well.

Among the three terms, equity is likely the most elusive and difficult to achieve. It is not necessarily the result of a simple equation, that is, “Diversity + Inclusion  $\neq$  Equity” (Joyce, 2020). In addition, some specialists have expressed concern with the merging of “equity, diversity, and inclusion” within the “EDI” acronym, as it is easy to focus more on diversity and inclusion and overlook equity. To achieve equity, organizations must begin with an understanding that the very structures with which they operate are not equitable by nature and that, “it is necessary to move beyond just having people in the room” (YW Boston, 2019). It also means questioning and making changes to core values and policies, including around hiring, the assignment of tasks, evaluation, and promotion. Advocates of gender parity, for example, note that women are often penalized for taking time off for maternity leave or in aligning their work schedules around childcare

needs (*The New York Times*, 2019). In this case, retooling for equity requires a readjustment in the assumptions around what constitutes attributes such as “loyalty,” “hard work,” and “dedication,” while also making it easier for parents to establish a work–life balance.

Equity may be more difficult precisely because it suggests a need for some members of an organization to acknowledge and cede the privileges that they enjoy—a seemingly tall task, even for faculty and staff who in principle are supportive of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Those who have been successful may balk at the idea of giving up what they feel they have rightly achieved and earned. At the same time, it behooves leaders to create inclusive environments where members of an organization feel welcomed and do not see a need to leave, thus taking away valuable skills, creativity, and expertise. As President and CEO of Living Cities Ben Hecht notes, “organizations cannot afford *not* to do this work, but they also can’t enter into it lightly, under the misconception that a training or workshop checks the box” (Hecht, 2020). This sort of change does not happen overnight and requires a long-term strategy and buy-in at all levels, starting at the top.

When combined as a joint concept, the order of the three terms explored thus far—equity, diversity, and inclusion—varies in use, with “DEI” and “EDI” being most prevalent. We believe that it is important to have all three included and not to truncate the terminology to “diversity and inclusion,” for instance. At the same time, we have intentionally chosen to use “EDI” in this publication, following the lead of The Forum and other organizations, with a belief that if equity is not placed in front, it is easy to omit. Much of this volume is precisely dedicated to strategies and activities designed to achieve equity and so this ordering aligns well.

As noted earlier, EDI falls under the umbrella of the AAC&U’s “Making Excellence Inclusive” initiative, leading to the widespread use of “inclusive excellence.” Begun in the mid-2000s, inclusive excellence was conceived in the wake of legal challenges to affirmative action (Milem et al., 2005), specifically the use of race in admissions decisions, as a way to strengthen the integration of diversity efforts within the larger assessment and improvement structures of institutions. This project has changed the landscape of higher education by offering a framework that positions educational excellence and diversity as intertwined and mutually reinforcing facets of campus activity for the first time. The original definition by the AAC&U (Milem et al., 2005) applies a strength-based perspective, with the goal that inclusive excellence addresses the social inequities that exist both for the benefit of those who have been marginalized and—critically—for *all* students. If students are to be prepared for an increasingly diverse world, it is imperative that those

with limited exposure to difference—or a low societal imperative to adapt to others’ cultural preferences, as with majority culture individuals—learn to understand and communicate effectively with people who are different from themselves. Education abroad can play a vital role in exposing students to new cultures and peoples, though here too we contend that such programming must be undertaken with EDI in mind (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018b).

Along with EDI has been the inclusion of a “J” for justice, often as part of “social justice” and/or “racial justice.” The language around social and racial justice has been long present in the U.S., though has been connected more recently with international education in *Social Justice and International Education: Research, Practice, and Perspectives* (2020) edited by LaNitra Berger. In Berger’s edited volume, social justice is defined differently by individual contributors, yet together they provide a framework that addresses three essential themes:

- (1) identifying and challenging institutional structures that perpetuate social inequality using a critical theoretical lens;
- (2) embracing a “bottom up” approach to thinking about how specific marginalized groups are affected by their relationships to power and privilege; and
- (3) developing processes and exercises that seek to analyze and interrogate individual and group biases. (p. 3)

The additive value of justice to EDI work emphasizes the need to rethink all aspects of the educational experience and environment taking into consideration that these environments were not originally designed for marginalized groups. Several of the chapters in this volume directly apply a social justice approach (e.g., Chapter 8 on inclusive application design, Chapter 9 on decolonizing education abroad, and Chapter 12 on Fulbright Noir) and all are informed on some level by the social justice work that has taken place over decades. While “justice” is not explicitly named in a number of chapters, the premise of this volume aligns with the intent of this construct: We must redesign education abroad by engaging communities who were not originally part of the creation and expansion of these opportunities, thereby creating room for different perspectives and priorities than tradition may suggest. Global educators must move beyond past efforts that merely attempt to reframe the same programs and services to appeal to a more diverse audience, particularly where this work occurs in the absence of input from the groups we intend to serve. Only through our willingness to reconsider every aspect of the education abroad journey will we uncover the design flaws in our “house” that have prevented greater equity of participation and lived experience abroad.

Lastly, we recognize that the terminology outlined here is U.S. centric, given our intended audience of those working with U.S. students, domestically or abroad (Gozik, 2018). Given the genesis of inclusive excellence, research and writing on this topic often focuses on EDI related to marginalized racial and ethnic identities in the U.S. context. Whereas race is especially salient in the U.S., other categories, for example, religion, ethnicity, gender, and disability, may be more prevalent in discourse and action in another setting. The definitions here allow for a shared language for the authors of this volume to employ, if also with a recognition that they are socially constructed and have a different meaning in other contexts.

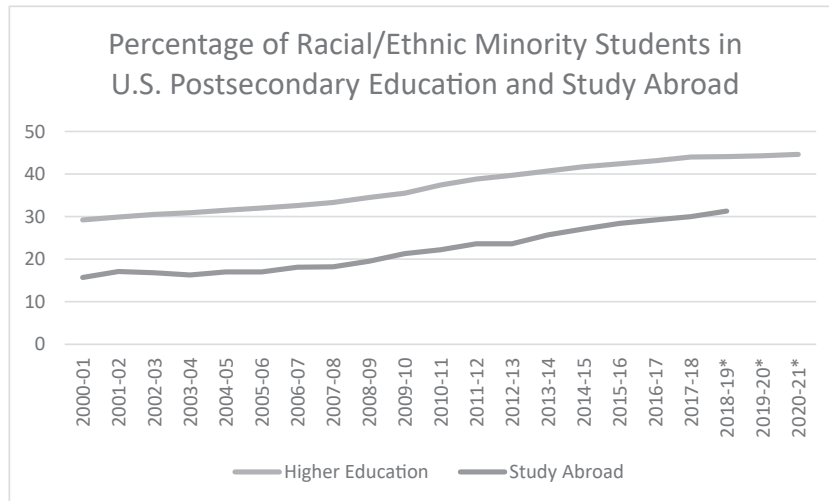
## **EDI and Education Abroad**

Advancing EDI in education abroad begins by taking stock of our current state. As we noted in 2018, the disparity between who is enrolled in postsecondary education and who goes abroad remains noticeable. As an example, racial and ethnic minority participation in study abroad increased almost 3% since 2018, reaching 31.3% in the 2020 *Open Doors* report (Institute of International Education, 2020a). However, participation still lags well behind overall trends in higher education, where racial and ethnic minority students represented 44% of postsecondary enrollments in 2017 with continuous growth projected through 2028 as the U.S. population becomes increasingly diverse (Snyder et al., 2019, p. 257). A similar pattern exists with respect to students with disabilities, whose participation in education abroad increased 2% over the same period to 10.5%, yet 19.1% of undergraduates reported disabilities in 2015–2016, the most recent reporting year (Snyder et al., 2019, p. 268).

The story these data tell over the three years since publication of *Promoting Inclusion in Education Abroad* does not fully represent the challenges that we face in our EDI efforts. As Figure 1.1 illustrates, over the past 20 years, the progress in diversifying education abroad participation is not closing the gap with respect to overall demographic change in higher education enrollment.

In the past decade, the field has indeed made progress, closing the gap in participation to 12.8%, yet that improvement merely returned participation rates of racial/ethnic minority students to levels already seen in the prior decade. With the magnitude of disruption in the U.S. and globally due to economic fallout and social and political instability, there are significant concerns that these same students will be the hardest hit, and we will once again lose ground in our collective efforts to promote inclusion in education abroad participation.





**Fig. 1.1** Source: Chart by authors, using data from the Institute of International Education (2020a) and the Digest of Education Statistics (Snyder et al., 2019).

The larger trend of educational disparity remains the backdrop for any discussion of who does or does not participate in education abroad. Rather than being discouraged by these trends, we see them as a sobering wakeup call regarding our assumptions about how to advance EDI within education abroad, a microcosm of the same concerns within the college-going experience. As with higher education itself, education abroad metrics tend to over-rely on representational data as a measure of success. We previously noted that significant attention has been paid to those who have access to the experience of education abroad—what we think of as opening the door to these opportunities. Yet, greater attention must be focused on inclusion beyond mere access, “applying this lens to inform pre-departure preparation, program design, and training for faculty and staff” (Barclay Hamir & Gozik, 2018a, p. 203). Representation does matter, but it is not the entire story, and the failure to look beyond it may be part of the reason participation rates are not changing faster.

Creating more equitable access to education abroad participation—opening the door—is only the beginning of EDI work in this space. Students’ experiences and well-being are affected by what happens when they go *through* the door, meaning their experiences prearrival, on-site, and upon return. The metaphorical “house” of education abroad emerged out of a long history of work with groups of students, destinations, and program models that informed and then formed the principal structures of our work, from

application processes to reentry. As the world changes, and more importantly the students within our educational system change, the assumptions embedded within all aspects of our work must also keep up. In this sense, we must redesign the metaphorical education abroad “house” we collectively inhabit to ensure that it is ready for and welcoming of the students we actually intend to serve; that it is, in fact, a house where all belong. This entails more than just cosmetic changes that are the equivalent of putting up new wallpaper and buying new furniture. Instead, we must be open to examining the very foundation and frame, to rebuild and reimagine its structure (e.g., walls, windows, openings) and systems (e.g., plumbing, electrical, and HVAC) as we seek to welcome and authentically engage all students.

Efforts to create educational equity within higher education have typically started without a parallel examination of the assumptions and biases embedded in higher education itself. That failure to support the whole student ultimately leads to inequities of experience, as higher education attrition and degree completion trends continue to demonstrate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Beyond the numbers, the experience of past participants informs the decisions of future students, with the potential to create counternarratives if those who participated found that staff throughout the process were not prepared to answer their specific questions or create an environment where students with different backgrounds and experiences all felt a sense of belonging.

To achieve different outcomes requires us first to review critically the role we play in the enrollment patterns we see, which sounds easier than it is. As noted earlier, the history and norms of education abroad have been largely shaped by predominantly White and often female students and practitioners. Given that international experience is often required or strongly preferred to be hired into education abroad positions, there is a natural pathway for social reproduction à la Bourdieu (1986): The experience of the student participant becomes the “normal” for new practitioners, reinforcing assumptions that are often unexamined. These assumptions can be surfaced through engagement with invested colleagues on campus who themselves are committed to EDI, or by changing hiring norms to include more individuals who represent underserved identities and those who are passionate about EDI, bringing new perspectives to office policies and practices. Yet ultimately, rethinking our roles in the inequities we see requires systematically rethinking policies, practices, and the underlying assumptions and biases that form them, from our beliefs about what constitutes a “good” education abroad candidate to our understanding of the needs and interests of students who are abroad.

## Education Abroad's Invisible Knapsack

When we are in the midst of the norms we have created, it can be challenging to untangle the assumptions and unconscious biases that may contribute to differential outcomes for our students, whether in terms of who goes abroad or how they experience their time abroad. That process of identifying, defining, and naming cultural phenomena underpins every effort to unmake the influence of power, privilege, and marginalization in society, from White privilege to heteronormativity to critical race theory. To progress, we must also name the norms and assumptions that lead to recurring enrollment patterns in education abroad and then we must work actively to undo them.

For those of us who are White, including both editors of this volume, White privilege as a construct serves as a useful lens through which to begin this discussion, particularly given the cultural influences that shape U.S. education and education abroad as we know it. In the late 1980s, Peggy McIntosh translated her research on male privilege to the idea that White individuals in the U.S. enjoy similar types of privileges compared to those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). In her seminal essay, "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible Knapsack" (1989), she describes the unearned advantages enjoyed by White people in the U.S. due to the color of their skin, advantages received in nearly every aspect of their lives and of which they are largely unaware. In describing why this phenomenon is invisible and pervasive, McIntosh states:

As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. (p. 10)

It is disturbing to realize the continued, critical relevance of the concept and the specific examples provided in the essay. As this volume is being published, more than three decades after McIntosh's article first came out, most of the advantages described remain true for White individuals, ranging from assumptions that a White person will not be followed in a store, to continuing representations of White people as the driving force behind "civilization" and the history of the U.S. (p. 10). For all the discourse at national and local levels, the fundamental structures of White privilege remain largely undisturbed, which cannot help but ripple through our work as international educators if left undisrupted.

Not all individuals will experience White privilege the same way. In a *Washington Post* opinion piece, for example, Steve Majors (Majors, 2020) explains that, within the same family, having lighter or darker skin can significantly impact how one navigates the world. As a Black man who passes

for White, he does not have the same fear of interacting with police as do his brothers with darker skin. Similarly, he recognizes the favors that he likely received from White faculty who treated him differently from fellow Students of Color. So, White privilege is not just about a self-defined racial identity; it is just as much about the perception of others. Moreover, it may be that the concept of White privilege feels less applicable to some, even if there is an agreement that discrimination and racism are real and endemic.

Dialogue on how to promote EDI in education abroad has expanded significantly over the past decade, with substantially more complex exploration of this topic at conferences and a broad range of professional development opportunities to help practitioners advance in their work. It is common now to find EDI highlighted in office resources and mission statements, all of which takes us in a positive direction. To McIntosh's point though, educators need to focus on identifying the corollary assumptions embedded in our policies, practices, and beliefs as a foundational step to understanding how to make meaningful progress in our EDI efforts. Given its endemic nature within U.S. culture, it follows that White privilege must also be ingrained in our collective practices, beliefs, and policies within higher education and, therefore, within education abroad. Viewed from this perspective, it is not difficult to unpack elements of education abroad's invisible knapsack of advantages for White students.

As an illustration, here are a few examples of White privilege that we have observed relative to White students studying in the top three study abroad destinations for U.S. students—the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain—which collectively enrolled nearly one-third of all participants in 2018–2019 (Institute of International Education, 2020a). As a White student,

- I will commonly see people with my skin color in promotional materials, individually and in groups.
- People in my host country are unlikely to be surprised when they learn that I am U.S. American.
- People in my host country are also unlikely to assume that stereotypical media or entertainment portrayals of people who look like me may be true of me.
- I am likely to find that most information shared to prepare me for my program answers my main questions about how I may experience the culture of my host country.
- Resident staff are probably prepared to answer most of my questions and understand my experience in the local context based on their history with other students like me.

The last three statements apply equally well to students in other marginalized groups. Similarly, other examples illustrate further embedded assumptions that may affect LGBTQ+ students or students who have a visible or invisible disability:

- I know that my sexual preferences and practices are generally legal and accepted by members of the community where I am studying abroad.
- I do not fear being asked questions, receiving ridicule or criticism, or being the victim of violence based on how I present my gender identity in a classroom or while walking down the street.
- When I apply to study abroad, faculty and administrators guiding me through the process generally understand my abilities and can offer advice and support catered to my needs.

It was disturbingly easy to create these lists, and many other privileges inherent to White, heteronormative participants without visible or hidden disability could just as easily be listed here. So, why is this exercise not a common practice in our field? Why have we not unpacked and remade our knapsack to make education abroad truly inclusive?

The answer to these questions stems in part from the fact that education abroad as a profession and an educational activity has been structured around certain forms of privilege, certainly including race and ethnicity as we have thus explored, yet also around socioeconomic status, students' areas of study, sexual orientation/gender identity, and parents' educational status, among others. If the first education abroad program developed in the U.S. at the University of Delaware in 1923 (n.d.) was designed for and composed solely of males, helping them to develop greater business acumen, over time, it evolved into the demographic trends the field has experienced for decades, where roughly two-thirds of participants are female, and a significant majority of participants are White. The evolution of study abroad from that first business-focused program included shifting toward an emphasis on language and centers of Western culture; such programs made sense in the locations that continue to remain popular in education abroad, including Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Although much has changed, many of the suppositions around where students should go and who is deemed a good fit are deeply embedded within an intersection of privileged identities that cannot be boiled down to just one, that is, race or gender or socioeconomic class. Identity is far more complicated and nuanced, as is education abroad's "invisible knapsack" of today. However, complexity is not an excuse for inaction; if we

do not interrogate our assumptions and privileges, it will be impossible to truly (re)design a house where all belong, as we advocate for in this volume.

The traditions of the profession continue to create implicit advantages and disadvantages based on how similar or dissimilar one is from assumed norms. To move forward, it is necessary to deconstruct the privileges and advantages embedded in our practice; our failure to do so is in part why we struggle to move the needle regarding who we serve and how we serve them. To paraphrase Kendi (2019), there is no neutral, there is only racist or antiracist, a construct that can be extrapolated to all the -isms, for example, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. If we are not deliberately evaluating “neutral” policies and practices, then we are most certainly perpetuating inequities in access to education abroad, advising, and the in-country experience.

### **Our Own Positionality**

As editors and authors, we come with our own perspectives and assumptions. While both editors have experienced some aspect of underrepresentation, for example, first-generation status, gender, and sexual orientation, the reality is that we also enjoy considerable privilege as individuals who are White, cis-gendered, educated, and upper-middle class by birth or upward social mobility. Some of our identities that might mark us as different are invisible, allowing us to blend easily, revealing only what and when we want to share. So, despite years of work on EDI issues, we have also come to acknowledge our own “invisible knapsacks.”

With these limitations in mind, we have intentionally sought out authors and peer reviewers with a wide range of identities. More than 50 authors and peer reviewers who have contributed to this volume currently live in five world regions and have origins in six continents. The authors work in different types of institutions and organizations, from nonprofit and for-profit entities (including program providers and funding organizations), government agencies, and private and public colleges and universities. Many grew up speaking languages other than English at home, ascribe to varying faiths and beliefs, and have lived and studied overseas. They are faculty, practitioners, and scholar-practitioners, including those not in education abroad, who can offer new ideas from outside the field.

Of course, we have wanted to stay clear of tokenism; instead, from the beginning of the project, the goal has been to draw from a rich and diverse community of colleagues, to make sure that we represent the profession to

the greatest extent possible. This latter point squares with the vision and mission of The Forum.

### **Moving the Needle: Reenvisioning the Education Abroad Process**

If it is necessary to recognize the privilege and assumptions embedded in education abroad, it is just as critical that we apply that lens to interrogate and overhaul existing practices and policies. This involves moving beyond the strategies employed to date, which have often been done piecemeal, tackling one stage of the overall education abroad process at a time rather than taking a holistic and systematic approach. Many offices, for example, have done a good job of making marketing more inclusive through images and testimonials of diverse students on their websites and in publications. This has not rested at what one might call the “Benetton approach,” as simply a marketing ploy that embraces the full spectrum of skin color (Giroux, 1993); there has been a genuine desire to ensure that a wide range of students see themselves authentically represented in marketing materials.

What often misses the mark, however, are the other stages of the process through which students learn about, apply for, and ultimately engage in education abroad. What happens when the male, first-generation, Mexican American, engineering student walks in the door? How do advisors engage him to uncover and address his questions or concerns? Is the application process so long and cumbersome that it inadvertently serves as a barrier, or overtly serves to screen students out? What does funding look like, and how is it explained? Are the specific needs of this student and others addressed in predeparture and on-site orientations? Are on-site staff prepared to address any microaggressions or identity-based concerns that may occur within the program and the host society? Does the student feel fully supported upon reentry? The fact that many have addressed just one aspect of the education abroad process and not all of the others is cause for optimism that meaningful change is possible.

Within each of the stages of the education abroad process, there is an opportunity and need to question one’s assumptions. Coming back to the terminology around EDI, here we seek to focus on not just getting students “in the door” of the education abroad house we are living in, our intention is to ensure that everyone may contribute fully—something that, in turn, pushes us to question notions of “fairness” and what is “right.” Taking the application process, for instance, we still speak about GPA minimums for education abroad as a fact, when in reality, they are a construct developed

by individuals who were trying to create a structure to exchange students and needed some markers to set the parameters for comfort on each side. If good academic standing is acceptable to receive a degree from a U.S. institution, why is it not the default for education abroad, instead of lower GPA requirements requiring justification? What elements of the education abroad application are the most useful in evaluating students, and why? Do those assumptions bear out in the experience or behavior of students abroad?

With any phase of the education abroad process, we might ask a set of simple questions: If we invented study abroad today within the cultural context and values we espouse, what would that look like? Would it be the same as or different than what we see as the “ideal”? And, to get to this ideal, it may help to ask: If education abroad as we know it in the U.S. had been developed by minoritized groups in the first place, what would it look like and how would it operate? It is hard to imagine that the program models, procedures, and policies would be exactly the same. The aim of this book is precisely to reexamine each stage of the education abroad process, with the goal of systematically and holistically shifting how we work with students.

## **Overview of Subsequent Chapters**

Subsequent chapters expand upon the themes that we have raised here and allow for a more in-depth analysis of the context and process of education abroad, with the goal of creating a more holistic and systematic set of changes for promoting inclusive excellence. The volume is organized into three parts: Framing the Discussion, Lessons Learned, and Next Steps.

In the first section, the authors provide additional context for work on EDI in education abroad. In Chapter 2, “Advancing Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” Alma Clayton-Pedersen, Thandi Dinani, Kevin Hovland, and Nick J. Gozik return to the original concept of AAC&U’s “Inclusive Excellence,” of which Clayton-Pedersen was a chief architect. Noting areas where more work needs to be done, particularly in terms of intercultural and global learning, they offer a model by which leaders and practitioners can move forward in meaningful and sustainable ways. Chapter 3, “The Promise of Equity-Minded Practice: Lessons Learned From Higher Education for Education Abroad,” by Eduardo Contreras, Asabe Poloma, and Ana M. Martínez Alemán, continues where Clayton-Pedersen et al. leave off by exploring the history of EDI efforts in U.S. higher education over the past several decades, while drawing on concrete examples from other fields that can be applied to education abroad.



The second and largest section reviews the phases of the education abroad process and organizational factors that shape it. Before students even step foot on campus, the authors of Chapters 4 and 5 make the argument that much is necessary to ensure that staff and programs, respectively, are adequately prepared. Chapter 4 “Inclusive Excellence Begins With Us: Developing Inclusive Organizational Cultures and Hiring Practices,” by Heather Barclay Hamir, Aileen Bumphus, Patricia Izek, and Betty Jeanne Taylor, draws on literature and best practices from the fields of human resources and leadership studies to demonstrate the need for more diverse staffing, as well as the ways in which institutions and organizations can retool their practices around recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retaining staff. For their part, Malaika Serrano, David Wick, and Devin Walker in Chapter 5, “Equity-Minded Program Design for Inclusive Excellence,” apply backward design to lay out methods for developing more inclusive programming, beginning with learning objectives and including all program components.

Once students arrive on campus, Brett Berquist, Shelley Jessee, and Jennifer Calvert Hall in Chapter 6, “Passing the Mic: The Role of Outreach, Messaging, and Marketing in Building Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” offer illustrations from the U.S. and New Zealand for how best to reach out to historically underrepresented students and encourage participation. As is the case in other chapters (e.g., 12, 13), they recommend collaborating with returning students, understanding that word of mouth and student-to-student communication is often far more powerful than any single marketing campaign. Chapter 7, “Advancing Inclusive Practices Through Appreciative Advising in Education Abroad” by Nikki Bruckmann, Opal Lee-man Bartzis, and Chris Van Velzer, describes the power of appreciative advising, an asset-based approach that focuses on students’ strengths and realization of their self-identified goals. The authors of Chapter 8 “Dismantling Exclusive Practices: Applications as Tools for Inclusion,” Taylor Woodman, Jeremy Gombin-Sperling, and Qimmah Najeeullah, similarly point out that it is equally important to reduce barriers to entry, including around the selection of students. This includes understanding how such practices are often guided by a skewed understanding of “fairness,” missing the mark entirely on equity.

Chapters 9 and 10 look more closely at students’ academic experiences. Chapter 9, “Decolonizing Education Abroad: Grounding Theory in Practice” by Santiago Castiello-Gutiérrez and Nick J. Gozik, explores education abroad through the prism of decolonization, borrowing from approaches introduced

in South Africa and stemming from a history of postcolonial thinking and activism. Similarly, Neriko Musha Doerr and Yuri Kumagai present case studies in Chapter 10, “Flickers of Difference: Living and Learning With Others Through Inclusive Classroom Projects,” which offer collaborative learning projects that can be applied on the home campus or abroad, helping students understand others’ viewpoints through dialogue, examine their own assumptions, and learn to relate to diverse individuals.

Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the program abroad, where on-the-ground staff play a key role in students’ experiences. Chapter 11, “Training “American” Identity: Engaging On-Site Staff in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Work,” by Martha Johnson, Bradley Titus, and Mariarosa Mettifogo, illustrates a training program developed for resident staff on diversity and the historical context of “American” identity(ies). The modules are adaptable to different country sites, demonstrating the need to modify content based on varying cultural and linguistic factors. In Chapter 12, “Fulbright Noir: Race, Identity, and Empowerment in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program,” LaNitra Berger, Lee Rivers, Erica Lutes, and Marie-Aimee Ntawukulityayo offer the perspective of overseas staff, responding to the needs of diverse U.S. students through Fulbright programming in Europe and globally.

Chapters 13 and 14 follow the return of students back to the U.S. Chapter 13, “Reentry Strategies to Apply Lessons Learned From Abroad,” by Maraina Montgomery, Neal McKinney, Jane Nzomo, Angela Manginelli and Lily López-McGee provides case studies from four institutions that have been successful in developing reentry programs tailored to the needs of diverse students, helping the latter to reintegrate on campus, while also encouraging peers to engage in overseas experiences. Closing out the education abroad process and bringing us back to the beginning of the planning cycle, Katherine Yngve and Elizabeth Brewer explore innovative outcomes assessment efforts in Chapter 14, “Alignment, Belongingness, and Social Justice: Using Assessment to Advance Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad,” with the goal of instilling a sense of belongingness in all students, and especially those who have historically been underrepresented.

Lastly, in Conclusion, “Acting With Courage: Charting a Path Forward for Education Abroad,” we return with a synthesis of key themes and recommendations to guide efforts in redesigning education abroad to advance inclusive excellence. Given the need for strong models with proven success in this area, organizations outside education abroad serve to illustrate how goals related to EDI are served within the larger educational space, suggesting strategies for practitioners and institutions to consider. Taken as a whole, the range of

chapters outlines concrete strategies that can be applied across an array of institutions and organizations, in the U.S. and abroad. Rather than simply addressing one stage of the education abroad process, we advocate for a holistic and systematic approach, which can move the needle to realize goals around inclusive excellence.

### **Variations in Terminology and Capitalization**

As we have noted, words matter and particularly in discussing politically and emotionally charged topics like EDI. In this and the concluding chapter, we have made a conscious decision, for example, to capitalize “White” in referring to race and ethnicity, along with other racial descriptors such as Black, Brown, and Indigenous, in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2020) and the guidance of the National Association of Black Journalists (2020). Doing so ensures that each of these identities—including those that have been historically marginalized—is fully recognized. It also acknowledges the ways in which Whiteness functions in institutions and communities, while not permitting those who identify as White to sit out of conversations related to race (Mack & Palfrey, 2020), with an assumption that they are exempt. At the same time, other authors have not chosen to capitalize, and as editors, we support the individual decisions of all author teams to express these complex topics in accordance with their own views and values.

Similarly, readers will note that in some chapters authors have employed terminology such as BIPOC, going beyond the earlier term “People of Color,” which has existed since colonial times, to something that is more inclusive (Garcia, 2020). Adding “Black” and “Indigenous” can also be a way of recognizing that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice (Clarke, 2020). Others take issue with this term, feeling that they do not want to be lumped in with other groups or that they do not agree with the formation of the group. Accordingly, within this volume, some authors instead have employed “People of Color” or referred to individual groups, rather than a broader amalgamation.

Rather than impose one style guide for this terminology and capitalization, we have encouraged individual authors to determine what is most appropriate for their respective chapters, based in many instances on individual subjects and case studies. The one exception is that we have asked all to refer to “EDI” as in “equity, diversity, and inclusion” rather than “DEI,” per the discussion earlier, with a goal of foregrounding equity within this book. Such nomenclature also aligns with the stylistic choice of The Forum.

## Concluding Thoughts

In the usual course of our lives, if we intend to redesign something—whether it is a house, a process, an office, or an organization—we would first ensure that we had thought through the plan for that redesign to make sure the end result served the intended purpose. However, we often have ideas in mind of what we hope to accomplish, and that makes the design process easier. With respect to EDI work in education abroad, or even in higher education, our vision of a redesigned system suffers from the lack of clear models of practice to follow. The piecemeal approach so often implemented in the profession contributes to the hazy sense of what holistic good practices looks like, and in the United States, this is further compounded by the widespread and ongoing struggle for equity and justice across multiple marginalized communities. This intersection of societal, institutional, and individual factors means that in our efforts to redesign education abroad, we perhaps need to think less in terms of incremental change and more in terms of truly rethinking what it is we do and why we do it. Given that we are not, in fact, dealing with a physical structure, where errors could be costly and potentially render a house unlivable, we encourage readers to view the advice and practical examples provided throughout this book as permission to explore, dream, and be bold in how we rethink our work. If we do so with inclusive excellence as our guiding principle, with a self-reflective and self-aware mindset focused on what is best for all students, we cannot help but improve from where we are now. We hope that readers will find inspiration, insights, and practical steps throughout this volume to inform their work in education abroad, and that as a collective, we will learn even more through iterative improvement across the field.

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**Authors:** Alma Clayton-Pedersen, Thandi Dinani, Kevin Hovland, and Nick J. Gozik

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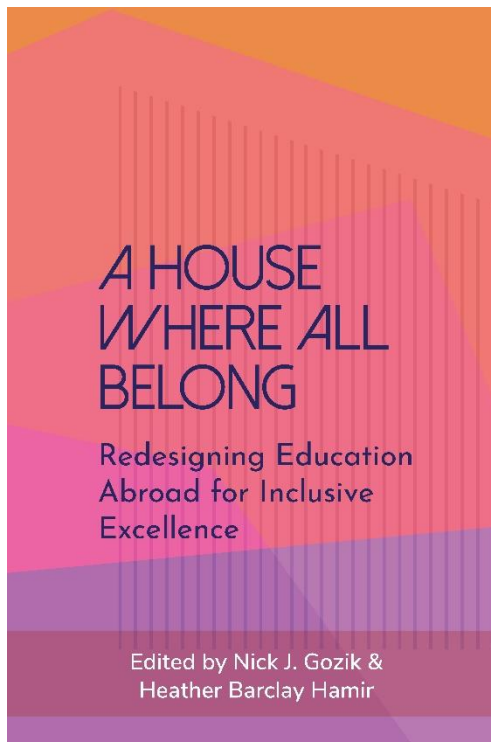
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# 2

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## Advancing Inclusive Excellence in Education Abroad

**Alma Clayton-Pedersen, Thandi Dinani,  
Kevin Hovland and Nick J. Gozik**

The persistent underrepresentation of students of color, first-generation students, and other marginalized groups in education abroad programs represents a failure of higher education to engage the full educational benefits of its diverse campus communities. It is not only that these students continue to miss out on a potentially life-changing learning experience. Education abroad experiences themselves—their goals, designs, content, pedagogies, and locations—are diminished because participants are missing the contributions and perspectives of broadly diverse cohorts. These missing elements are critical to understand the cultural similarities and differences that education abroad is designed to explore.

Similarly, when education abroad professionals do not design their programs so that participants are exploring questions of race, class, power, and privilege intentionally and vigorously—the very issues that have historically shaped participation in education abroad—they fail to prepare students for an interconnected, interdependent, and just global future. Consequently, the case for the relevance of education abroad programs to the widest range of students is often lost. In addition, one of the most compelling arguments for



recruitment to education abroad programs and other paths to global learning is blunted.

The good news is that colleges and universities are making progress in this area, and good intentions are evident. The Forum on Education Abroad, for example, includes Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as one of four Guiding Principles in its *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2020a). To build on such progress, institutional leaders need to continue to situate their inclusion efforts within the context of broad questions of educational quality and definitions of excellence. As Clayton-Pedersen and Musil argue, “diversity is not typically a focus at any level of ‘quality improvement’ efforts. As a result, education leaders routinely work on diversity initiatives within one committee on campus and work on strengthening the quality of the educational experience within another” (2005, vii). By insisting that the demands for inclusion and quality are coupled, those who translate their institutional goals into practice can gain important insights into the systemic obstacles that need to be removed. In this way, they may also develop new, creative approaches to their work.

This chapter provides an overview of the concepts of Inclusive Excellence along with several closely related educational reform efforts. In addition to illuminating an important theoretical foundation, the chapter also offers practical strategies for applying the Inclusive Excellence framework to the ongoing critical challenge of improving equity in education abroad, through the implementation of what is referred to as the “RIBS” model.

The practical recommendations are designed to stimulate conversation and collaboration in all functional areas of education abroad. Inclusive Excellence ideals are not nurtured in a siloed environment. Excellence and inclusion are not two separate goals for education abroad. They must be pursued together, each furthering the other. Success requires insights, collaboration, and resources from across the campus and up and down the organization.

## **What Is Inclusive Excellence?**

Before continuing further, it is necessary to define what we mean by “Inclusive Excellence”—a term that has been used widely though not always sustaining its original definition and purpose. Inclusive Excellence is a framework that many colleges and universities have used to strengthen and coordinate their efforts in four areas critical to mission: diversity, inclusion, equity, and educational quality. The framework has emerged from decades of practice at a wide range of campuses, where institutions have observed that while their student bodies were becoming more diverse, institutional structures and metrics of quality and equity were not keeping pace with change.

The James Irvine Foundation provided initial funding to Claremont Graduate University and the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to establish the Campus Diversity Initiative (CDI). The CDI engaged a group of 28 California colleges and universities over a period from 2000 to 2005. The CDI informed and assessed an array of campus diversity and inclusion efforts. The Inclusive Excellence framework emerged early during this process and informed the professional development opportunities designed over the course of the 5-year project. In 2003, AAC&U received additional funding from the Ford Foundation to continue to develop and refine Inclusive Excellence and share it with a national audience.

AAC&U was a logical choice to take national leadership on this work as its member institutions have always been deeply engaged in efforts to reform undergraduate education. These efforts included foregrounding questions of diversity and democracy in the curriculum and mission; developing well-articulated learning outcomes for all students; inventing and refining assessment tools needed to measure those outcomes; building capacity to utilize data that are produced by those assessment tools; improving pedagogies linked to student learning outcomes; and helping faculty members, administrators, and professional staff acquire the skills needed for all of the above. Additional information can be obtained from *Diversity Digest* (2003) and four AAC&U publications, including a monograph and three briefing papers developed as a *Making Excellence Inclusive* series (AAC&U, 2005–2007).

AAC&U enjoyed the further advantage of close relationships with valuable partners. The University of Southern California, Center for Urban Education (CUE), National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Bloomington (NSSE), The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), and others made critical contributions to the work of Inclusive Excellence. Other AAC&U initiatives provided insights and tools: VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education), LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise), and Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility, primary among them. As this list suggests, there is an extensive literature related to both the theory of Inclusive Excellence and the data that support it.

The current definition of Inclusive Excellence emerged through these collaborative efforts that were intended to be flexible enough to evolve through practice and be adapted to individual campus realities, while also incorporating four primary elements:

1. A focus on student intellectual and social development. Academically, it means offering the best possible course of study for the context in which the education is offered.

2. A purposeful development and utilization of organizational resources to enhance student learning. Organizationally, it means establishing an environment that challenges each student to achieve academically at high levels and each member of the campus to contribute to learning and knowledge development.
3. Attention to the cultural differences that learners bring to the educational experience and that enhance the enterprise.
4. A welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in the service of student and organizational learning (Milem et al., 2005, p. vi).

In this chapter, we focus on the *practices* that help advance Inclusive Excellence. “The action of making excellence inclusive,” according to AAC&U’s website, “requires that we uncover inequities in student success, identify effective educational practices, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change” (2020). We examine each of these actions in turn later, providing additional theoretical context as needed and explicitly linking them to education abroad when possible.

### **Uncovering Inequities in Student Success**

As Williams, Berger, and McClendon argue, “To create a ‘culture of inclusive excellence,’ higher education leaders must consider how their campus environments can adapt to meet the needs of today’s highly diverse entering students, rather than beginning with the assumption that diverse students must assimilate into existing environments with relatively narrow measures of quality” (2005, p. 9). Key to such an undertaking is developing appropriate metrics for success, collecting data on those metrics, and disaggregating those data to illuminate disparate outcomes.

Such practices reflect the development of *equity-mindedness*, which refers to a demonstrated awareness of and willingness to:

- address equity issues among institutional leaders, faculty, staff, and students;
- take stock of the contradictions between the ideals of democratic education and the social, institutional, and individual practices, as well as policies, expectations, and unspoken rules, that contribute to persistent inequalities in outcomes among different groups; and
- acknowledge the sociohistorical context of exclusionary practices, racism, and the effect of power asymmetries on opportunities and outcomes for

those who are underserved, underrepresented or have been marginalized. (Bensimon et al., 2016; Witham et al., 2015)

Equity-mindedness in education abroad means that diverse perspectives and cultures are represented among those engaged in the process of setting program priorities. All stakeholders need to be confident that their inclusion is not solely dependent upon them having been previously overlooked or excluded. For example, most education abroad opportunities are an added expense for students. Few institutions include such costs as part of tuition and not all provide for full aid transferability as part of their financial aid packages. When not all costs associated with the program (travel, food, housing, etc.) are included in tuition and ineligible for institutional aid, it makes it difficult for low-income students to participate, regardless of background. For other students, the challenge may be fear or lack of knowledge about the power of an education abroad experience. Often, even middle-income students of all races and ethnicities must work while attending college, making it difficult for them to have an education abroad experience. Together, stakeholder groups can identify and address the structural barriers reflected in current education abroad designs and supports.

Institutions can begin by assessing the degree to which *all* students view education abroad as a desirable learning experience. How do these viewpoints look when they are disaggregated by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other diversity dimensions? What if leaders considered education abroad similarly to the majors that require more institutional resources than others? For example, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors require work in laboratory and/or field settings, which necessitate added expenses. Leaders should consider education abroad or campus-based global learning a necessary endeavor for students who envision future careers that require global understanding and/or engagement. The cost of the laboratory expenses is included as part of STEM students' tuition; the means of broadening participation in education abroad could be addressed similarly.

### **Identify Effective Educational Practices**

In recent years, there has been an explosion of work related to establishing and assessing student learning outcomes. At the most basic level, well-defined and well-articulated student learning outcomes are required before any determination of educational effectiveness can be made. This is true for a course, a major, general education, and education abroad. The AAC&U VALUE project has taken the lead in creating assessment tools to

measure the effectiveness of 16 educational practices vis-à-vis learning outcomes. This process included the creation of rubrics derived from commonly used outcomes developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the U.S. For example, the Global Learning Rubric defines<sup>1</sup> and identifies the following outcome areas: Global Self-Awareness, Perspective Taking, Cultural Diversity, Personal and Social Responsibility, Understanding Global Systems, and Applying Knowledge to Contemporary Global Contexts. Each outcome area corresponds to a description of the evidence of what the outcome would look like (AAC&U, n.d.).

Ultimately, using the Global Learning Rubric or a similar process should enable practitioners to assess the effectiveness of their programs. If students are not demonstrating the expected evidence of global learning, the learning practice will likely need to be reexamined. In addition, if some students are reaching expected outcomes and others are not, an equity-minded approach and disaggregated data are needed to assess the program elements.

Advancing Inclusive Excellence requires global and study away educational experiences to enhance participants' ability to understand the dynamics of the global challenges humanity faces, while examining an array of worldviews. These include the recent COVID-19 pandemic, fair trade across country boundaries, fair wages for workers, and the varied human conditions created by poverty. It also includes different worldviews among various population groups within their own country. Inclusive Excellence strategies seek to ensure that students complete their education abroad and study away with a worldview that goes beyond the place where they have the experience. Instead, a goal should be to assist students in putting the challenges and perspectives of other countries in relationship to their own to understand both better. The goal of global learning should be to develop students' understanding of the important role everyone has in maintaining the safety of humanity equitably, as well as the sustainability of our globe.

While some programs may accomplish this goal, too often learning outcomes from education abroad mainly reflect students' individual growth and

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<sup>1</sup>AAC&U Value Rubric definition of Global Learning: Global learning is a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability. Through global learning, students should (1) become informed, open minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences; (2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities; and (3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably. Retrieved from the AAC&U website January 14, 2021.

development. These outcomes include learning another language or learning differences in business operations within a country's context. Clearly, these are useful educational gains, but students' learning could be expanded further and gain more when the experience is also grounded. This includes better understanding the country's history and culture, and most importantly, the underlying forces that highlight both differences and commonalities to the students' home countries. A depth of understanding of others who are different from oneself is foundational to realizing Inclusive Excellence as a lifelong goal of building cultural competence.

A parallel approach to educational effectiveness focuses on student engagement. Evidence of this type indicates that education abroad is a high-impact practice (HIP) that is effective in helping students achieve important learning outcomes. The ideas behind such HIPs have increasingly gained national attention since being introduced by Kuh (2008). AAC&U has also compiled a list of resources on education abroad specifically (Musil 2015), while other researchers and practitioners are recognized for leadership in researching the impact of all 11 HIPs (Kinzie et al., 2017). These resources will be of interest when developing the rationale for equitably expanding access to education abroad for historically underrepresented students.

As HIPs have been implemented more broadly and become the common shorthand for effective learning, it is important to understand what gives such practices their power. As Kuh (2008) describes them, HIPs:

- typically demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks.
- put students in circumstances that demand that they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters.
- increase the likelihood that students will experience diversity through contact with people who are different than themselves.
- provide students . . . frequent feedback about their performance.
- help students . . . see how what they are learning works in different settings, on and off campus. (pp. 14–17)

Education abroad advocates and practitioners are passionate about their work because they believe that education abroad is a transformational learning experience. Kuh's work supports that intuitive conviction and illuminates some of the principles of good practice and design that make it so (Hovland, 2014). It is most important to note, however, that these practices have a high impact only when they are done well, as highlighted in the afterword (Clayton-Pedersen & Finley, 2010) of a study of 5 HIPs (Brownell

& Swaner, 2010). HIPs represent the best learning experiences that colleges and universities have to offer. Therefore, it is important that all students be encouraged and enabled to take advantage of them and that institutions identify and ensure equitable access to such experiences.

### **Sustained Institutional Change: The RIBS Model**

Although much can be done on an individual level, we argue that a true shift toward inclusive practices in education abroad can only be achieved through sustained and successful institutional efforts. These efforts are the focus of the remainder of this chapter that is devoted to a detailed discussion of the RIBS model and its application. This model evolved from what was first conceptualized in Clayton-Pedersen's (1994) dissertation that focused on efforts to mobilize people who work on similar human development objectives. She observed that those institutions providing assistance to families in economic distress too often worked in parallel rather than in concert to move families to sufficiency. An earlier version of the RIBS framework was published in 2007 (Clayton-Pedersen & Dungy). Since then, the model has been refined through direct engagement with hundreds of campuses and nonprofit organizations.

The RIBS acronym stands for the following:

- *Raising awareness* among faculty, staff, and administrators of the institution's EDI challenges related to global learning and identify options to address them;
- *Increasing knowledge* about and understanding of these challenges to uncover its elements and the viable options required to address them effectively;
- *Building capacity* across the organization to identify and guide the essential tasks and professional development needed to achieve equitable outcomes using disaggregated data for assessment; and
- *Sustaining and evolving* successful efforts using relevant and effective assessment processes and tools, and using the narratives and data generated to reconfigure or eliminate elements that cannot demonstrate value in achieving their intended outcomes, while refining and expanding those that achieve their goals.

Each dimension of the RIBS model represents a scaffolding of institutional knowledge and action needed to accomplish various stated goals and to sustain the efforts successfully. RIBS enables stakeholders to develop shared understandings and common intellectual frameworks so they are in

agreement regarding the elements necessary for success. The model encourages the kinds of robust collaborations necessary to engage the insights and practices of global learning and education abroad. It also offers a structure that generates insightful conversations about inclusion, diversity, equity, and excellence that informs the practices of global learning and education abroad.

The model also helps stakeholders recognize their overlapping and intersecting responsibilities for student success and positions students and their learning outcomes at the center of campus conversations. These then become important shared goals that are “owned” across traditional institutional divides between faculty, staff, administrators, managers, practitioners, and academic programs. Consequently, the RIBS model can be an efficient and effective means of acknowledging and addressing student learning, which takes place in the context of disciplines, departments, majors, and other less formal places and arrangements.

### **Applying the RIBS Model to Education Abroad**

The RIBS action steps were initially conceived as a way for institutional leaders to identify, examine, and address the EDI challenges they faced. This model is equally well suited to offer education abroad stakeholders—including staff and faculty on campuses and working at education abroad provider organizations—a means to examine their programming critically. Its use can help stakeholders improve the design, practice, and assessment of education abroad in order to develop programs that lay a strong foundation for all students to make cultural competence a lifelong pursuit.

Although institutions vary in their structure and responsibilities, education abroad administrators may find themselves in a single-person office and have multiple personnel throughout a decentralized campus, one large staff that manages operations, or entities that function as a program provider partner for other institutions. Recognizing the vast difference in education abroad offices, this model is designed to assist readers in recognizing all stakeholders and consider who needs to be included in conversations. In addition, readers will find similarities between RIBS concepts and the recommendations found in The Forum’s *Standards of Good Practice* (2020a); the RIBS model provides additional perspective on how the recommendations occur within institutional structures.

***Raising Awareness:*** Education abroad professionals are most frequently tasked with raising awareness of education abroad and its value to a wide array of students. Those on the front lines, advisors in particular, are informed



and well equipped to assist in identifying barriers and challenges in recruitment, application processes, and during the abroad experience. They can articulate students' rationale for participation as well as the challenges and benefits of their experiences—drawing on data, anecdotes, and other sources of information about their students. For these reasons, it has been argued that the education abroad field itself needs to become more diverse in order to best represent and advocate on behalf of a diverse student body (Charles & Wojenski, 2020).

At the same time, the full workload cannot rest on the shoulders of individual staff members, especially when it comes to transforming a whole system. It is just as important for leaders who oversee institutional improvement efforts to understand what needs to be done to achieve expected global learning outcomes among all students. In keeping with the values of Inclusive Excellence, there is general agreement that diverse communities of learners can increase learning for the entire community (Hurtado et al., 1999). Yet, diversity efforts have more often focused on compositional diversity, without concomitant attention to learning practices that promote educational equity and draw out the strengths of diverse learning environments.

To affect broader change, it is necessary to raise awareness across institutional structures, functions, and with intersecting groups. All leaders must understand the negative impact of inequitable educational opportunities when specific groups are underrepresented in HIPs like education abroad, as well as the value to campus and the institution's future of graduates who are globally and culturally competent. That awareness may focus on various facets of campus activity: developing overarching support structures and educational priorities advanced and supported by institutional leaders; evaluating whether existing abroad opportunities are accessed equitably and promote equitable learning outcomes abroad; and reviewing at the academic department level how education abroad, and other HIPs, are made explicit, relevant, and valuable to the student's degree, and available in all majors in their disciplines.

The support of institutional leaders at every level creates opportunities to advance campus-wide discussions on equity in education abroad, particularly now at junctures like the present, where EDI is top of mind on most campuses. When education abroad leaders can link this exploration to larger EDI conversations, it will position education abroad as a relevant illustration of how inequities occur and how they limit students' access to these educational outcomes. From the opening year convocations of college-level faculty, elevating education abroad participation as a facet of larger institutional

priorities related to educational equity, quality, and access, positions it as a relevant opportunity within the scope of these campus discussions. This might involve having the President or Provost prioritize education abroad for the upcoming year (e.g., Western Kentucky University, 2013) or present awards to faculty or staff for work already done in this area (e.g., Grand Valley State University's "Internationalization Award," n.d.). Both of these examples can send a message for faculty and staff to shift their efforts and resources accordingly.

It is equally difficult to imagine that any efforts in student advocacy will be successful without involving faculty (who may also play a double role as staff). Faculty are instructors, advisors, and mentors, who know and understand students' lives. They are likewise integrally involved in curricular decision-making. Faculty senates and committees are ideal places to consider connections between students' experiences on campus and abroad, as well as strategies for increasing EDI in global programming. Some institutions like Western Michigan University (n.d.) have set up separate international education councils with an express charge of addressing diversity and inclusion. At the same time, faculty are themselves highly involved in implementing education abroad programs, as faculty leaders and instructors—a trend that has continued with the sharp increase in short-term and faculty-led programs (Institute of International Education, 2019). In this capacity, faculty are positioned to speak personally about the benefits that their students gain from overseas programming.

At the same time, institutions need to ensure that other key constituents are made aware of the importance of both education abroad and Inclusive Excellence, including parents, students, donors, and alumni. Each group requires a different communication strategy. It can be helpful, for example, to communicate core values to parents and prospective students during recruitment events and parent weekends. This might include presentations and marketing materials catered to various groups. Some institutions have translated this information into various languages (e.g., Spanish and Mandarin), to make the content more accessible. Similarly, presentations and discussions might take place during alumni gatherings and Trustees meetings. The more the stakeholder actors are involved, it is more likely that the narrative around education abroad will be shifted.

***Increasing Knowledge:*** Once awareness has been raised, the next step is to gather more information and data. It is critical to understand students' needs and desires, existing individual and institutional barriers and challenges, and

examples of where success has already been achieved. Otherwise, we may find that we are simply doing a lot of work without making any headway.

As with raising awareness, increasing knowledge must have a campus-wide reach to have the greatest impact. Here, it is helpful to start with diagnostic tools such as Sweeney's (2013) adaption of the AAC&U's Inclusive Excellence Scorecard (Williams et al., 2005), tailored to evaluate an institutions' progress toward equity and access in study abroad. Sweeney's scorecard includes four areas, each of which comes with a set of sample indicators: access and equity within study abroad, the campus climate, diversity within formal and informal curricula, and the learning and development of study abroad participants. This configuration supports the collection of data and information both at the campus level (e.g., race/ethnicity composition of faculty, staff, and students; concerns around discrimination and injustice on campus) and within education abroad units (e.g., diversity of students participating in education abroad; and resources and opportunities for reflection on race/ethnicity within predeparture/on-site/and reentry activities). Such analyses will demonstrate that all of these indicators are interconnected and part of a larger picture.

To answer the questions that Sweeney raises, leaders and staff need to know more about the students who are eligible to participate yet are missing from education abroad, as well as those who participate. Many of these data are already available, if not always mined sufficiently, through campus-wide information systems. These may include collecting information on self-reported race/ethnicity/gender; grades, majors/minors, graduation rates, and financial aid status; and education abroad databases including study destinations and initial interest versus actual participation. Data should be disaggregated by race, gender, and gender identity, as well as by ability status, disciplinary majors, and overall student demographics and economic status (i.e., recipients or nonrecipients of Pell government grants). It is also possible to obtain data from national and campus-wide surveys such as first-year, senior, NSSE, IPEDS, and program and course-level evaluations. Likewise, it is useful to conduct an analysis of messaging to current and prospective students through websites, marketing materials, and public announcements (Gozik, 2015).

At the same time, it is also crucial to hear directly from those students most affected. The majority of participants report positive education abroad experiences. However, through mechanisms such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys, it is important to identify and consult with students who do not provide positive feedback to discover what would have made

their experiences more positive. Student returnees can help identify areas of support that would have made their experience more inclusive and equitable (Schulze, 2016). Findings can be disaggregated to determine if all students report similar experiences in academic, co-curricular programming, and housing (e.g., homestays, apartments with roommates from host countries, apartments with American roommates). Questions to consider include: In what areas do historically underserved and marginalized students report the need for assistance? Are resources readily available for these students when they arrive? What practices at home campuses and host institutions cause students to feel singled out and/or ostracized?

Just as importantly, it is essential to know more about students who chose *not* to go abroad. One might ask male students, for example, what hinders their plans to participate in education abroad, whether they value education abroad, and what would add value to education abroad for them (Lucas, 2018)? Similarly, are students of color, students from low-income families, and other underrepresented groups provided with opportunities that are most appealing or applicable to them?

Throughout this process, faculty and staff can be instrumental in digging deeper into students' experiences on individual programs. This can include tracking programs that have been more (or less) successful in recruiting and engaging a greater diversity of students. For example, the "Paris Noir" program at Boston College attracted a large number of students of color (Hackett, 2018), both from a number perspective and in determining where students feel most supported through curricular and co-curricular programming. The latter can be gleaned by talking to students during postreturn debriefing sessions and by analyzing their responses to postprogram evaluations. It is also essential to review outcomes assessment data to understand where students have met stated learning outcomes. Particularly important are outcomes data related to coping with ambiguity, relating to people who are different from oneself, and becoming more globally and/or interculturally competent. These can be measured by tools such as the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and the VALUE Rubrics.

***Building Institutional Capacity:*** Once barriers to participation have been identified, key constituents need to work together to undertake the work of removing those barriers. This will entail exploring and enacting a variety of strategies that are necessary to make participation equitable for those who historically have been underserved. As outlined in Chapter 1 of this volume by Gozik and Barclay Hamir, building institutional capacity in this sense goes

well beyond making a few superficial changes, and instead suggests broader, more holistic approaches that address structural changes.

Much of this work relies on establishing clear learning outcomes, as noted earlier, with particular attention to increasing awareness of diverse people and their perspectives and developing intercultural competence. If we do not know what students should learn and gain from programs, how can we confirm that programs and administrative structures that support them will be effective? A tremendous amount has already been written on learning outcomes assessment efforts in education abroad in (see Chapter 13 in this volume by Yngve and Brewer). This research repeatedly emphasizes the need to integrate learning outcomes into all stages of a student's education abroad process, including stating goals for students prior to departure (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Once learning outcomes have been established, it becomes much easier to select other program components, such as courses, housing, and activities that align accordingly and add much more intentionality to programming (Gozik & Oguro, 2020).

Also important is making sure that there is sufficient funding to make student aid available, additional advising and support staff, and programs with broad appeal. In fact, the majority of institutions with high study abroad participation (i.e., 29%–100% of graduates studied abroad) were private (U.S. News & World Reports, 2020). This suggests that public institutions and those with smaller endowments and budgets may need to find creative fundraising strategies to make education abroad and study away offerings more inclusive. Obtaining sufficient funding involves enlisting the help of colleagues across the institution. For example, a perceptive chief financial officer (CFO) might suggest reallocating existing resources, or suggest a means of generating new resources, to support low-income students' abroad experiences. Other suggestions include the CFO offering enough seed money to build programs that show promise of eventually becoming self-sustaining. Development offices also can be strong partners in fundraising efforts, as can department chairs and office leaders who may have access to grants and scholarships. Financial aid officers can help the campus community understand financial aid rules and help students develop budgets. Advisors in education abroad offices can research, cull, and communicate funding opportunities including those offered through the U.S. Departments of State (e.g., Gilman, Boren, and Fulbright awards), the U.S. Department of Education, and through private organizations and donors.

In addition to finances, it is necessary to collaborate with colleagues to ensure that education abroad is effectively integrated into other academic

and co-curricular programming on the home campus. Equity-minded and effectively developed cross-cultural engagement can sufficiently awaken learners' curiosity and desire to pursue developing their cultural competence as a lifelong endeavor. This would include courses that examine topics related to EDI and disciplines such as history, psychology, and sociology that examine the histories of different cultures and human behavior. Education abroad staff may have little control over the direction of curricula and other programming, yet they can collaborate with colleagues in departments to develop courses that complement education abroad experiences (e.g., pre-program courses on campus, senior seminars). The Duke Immerse program and Boston College's McGillycuddy-Logue Fellows program are examples of institutions that offer a sequence of abroad and on-campus activities that assist students in putting the pieces together.

Collaborations with other departments on campus can set clear road maps for students to incorporate education abroad activities into their majors/minors. This ensures that students can graduate on schedule while also gaining a global perspective. It is especially important for students in fields with little flexibility regarding sequencing coursework such as engineering, the health sciences, and education. Developing these strategies takes time, but they can achieve relatively quick outcomes in terms of participation rates, including for majors/minors that have historically been underrepresented in education abroad such as Boston University's engineering program (Pérez-Juez & Eisenberg, 2018).

To ensure that faculty and staff are prepared to support students and follow through on the aims outlined earlier, institutions need to offer sufficient professional development and resources. In the U.S., international education organizations like The Forum on Education Abroad, NAFSA, Diversity Abroad, and the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) offer such support. These offerings include conferences and workshops that can be tailored to institutional needs, opportunities to serve on committees that engage in discussions online and in person, and printed resources and workshops that can be tailored to institutional needs. Many also provide sharing opportunities within listservs, where institutional representatives can ask questions and gather information. Sister organizations have similarly been established in other regions (EAIE and APAIE) and countries (APUAF and APUNE). For more specific topics such as the development of intercultural competence, colleagues might consider attending Wake Forest University's annual WISE conference and the Institute for Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning. It is also helpful to look beyond the international

education community for events and professional development that can help inform the needs of specific groups of students.

At the same time, it is vital to recognize that building capacity means working with education abroad partners, including institutions, homestay families, and on-site staff that may be hired by a provider or the home campus. There are limitations regarding what can be done on the home campus, given that much of students' abroad experiences will take place overseas. There are also significant cultural differences that may affect the extent to which colleagues in other countries may understand and be able to respond to student needs. Similar to earlier, it is necessary to provide professional development and a space for cross-cultural dialogue (see the University of Minnesota example in Chapter 11 of this volume). Such preparations enable on-site staff to be better positioned to facilitate reflection opportunities that challenge students to examine their biases in host and home countries and identify similarities and differences in home and host communities that have been marginalized and underserved.

When assembled, each of the various components outlined lead to greater institutional capacity as well as to more holistic and systemic changes. Without clear learning outcomes, programmatic changes, broad campus support, and opportunities for professional development, it is unlikely that there be long-term, significant growth. At the same time, it is important to make sure that any modifications made are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

***Sustaining Efforts:*** The fourth aspect of RIBS, sustaining the effort, is paramount. Sustaining and evolving inclusive and equitable education abroad practices begin in the first stage of the RIBS process by raising the community's awareness of the challenges and effects of exclusion and inequities in education abroad. Once the process of deep engagement by the campus community is established, institutional leaders and educators should consider the means by which the actions identified remain relevant and develop processes to address the diversity in the student populations who seek education abroad.

All stakeholders will need to collaborate to sustain efforts. Invite colleagues into the entirety of the education abroad process and find opportunities to collaborate throughout the entirety of students' experiences. It is important for historically marginalized and underserved students to have safe spaces where they can share their experiences and receive support. Historically marginalized and underserved students may not perceive personnel within education abroad offices as people to whom they can express their

frustrations and challenges. Moreover, in general, students do not always see education abroad advisors as the most trusted sources of information (Stroud, 2015).

One challenge is staffing. We all know of that amazing colleague who begins a new program or initiative and then leaves, allowing the activity to disappear, falter, or fall into disarray. This is more likely to occur when strong efforts to collaborate across organizational lines are limited or nonexistent. The challenge of turnover makes it even more important for hiring officials to seek and hire candidates across the institution who demonstrate skills in collaboration and EDI, not just in one unit. Programming is also likely to continue when there is cross-unit professional development for staff, sufficient and long-term funding, and a full understanding across a unit/organization about the aims, policies, and practices of a given activity.

Equally important is a need to review programs and communication strategies on a regular and cyclical basis, thus closing the loop. It is all too easy to be caught up in the act of “doing,” without taking time to ensure that one is still holding steady to previously established goals and evolving those that have ceased to serve their original purpose. Adding recurring check-in meetings and/or calendar reminders can serve as helpful reminders. With some auditing procedures, reviews may be built into existing processes. If not, a department or office may set up a timetable for more extensive evaluations, perhaps including colleagues from other areas of campus or other institutions. Any appraisal can and should include an analysis of students’ experiences and attainment of learning outcomes and using the results to improve the programs.

Any program or initiative will need to adapt based on students’ needs and/or institutional priorities. Yet, arbitrary means to increase the participation of those who historically have been marginalized will thwart efforts to make excellence inclusive in education abroad and undermine the very students this work seeks to engage. Instead, success requires that designers prioritize engaging members of these communities of students for their input regarding the barriers they face to participating in the programs. Better ensuring newcomers success requires being open to new ideas and practices that emerge from listening to the voices of a full range of diverse communities. This requires that we seek a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of all students, not just some students.

Likewise, it should be assumed that situations will arise that necessitate adjustments to the identified engagement strategies and activities. The recent pandemic is a perfect example of the need for educators to change course as



needed. In all of these ways, sustainability may suggest that an activity needs to exist in perpetuity or remain unchanged. The programming itself is not the end goal. Instead, the goal is to serve as broad and diverse array of students while ensuring that all students have an opportunity to take full advantage of what the experience has to offer. Accordingly, sustainable practices must keep such long-end goals in mind.

Sustainability also requires creative approaches to reimagining the goals and methods that attract students to education abroad and appeals to students' interests and experiences so that they all can recognize its value to their personal, educational, civic, and professional futures. Consideration must likewise be given to devising means for campus community reflection on what makes existing models work, for whom they are working, and which processes require repair. Without such a soul-searching examination, we may miss the goal of broadening participation. That goal includes providing equitable and inclusive opportunities to those who previously have been overlooked.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter does not present an Inclusive Excellence "2.0" per se, rather it returns us to the fundamentals of what was initially outlined by the AAC&U's Making Excellence Inclusive initiative in 2005. Taking education abroad as one slice of higher education, we have considered the extent to which making excellence inclusive has been realized while also developing a road map for expanding full participation, using the RIBS model developed by Clayton-Pedersen, one of the chief architects of the AAC&U's Inclusive Excellence initiative.

A primary reason that global learning is important for all students is that such experiences develop cultural competence. We must also be creative in reimagining the goals and methods of education abroad and study away so that all students can recognize its value to their educational and civic futures. Through well-designed experiences, students become more aware of their own cultural worldview, recognize their attitude toward cultural differences, understand different cultural practices and worldviews, and become more thoughtful in cross-cultural interaction. Another is that global learning experiences are among the well-researched, high-impact pedagogical practices. Yet, we must seek a better understanding of the needs and perspectives of all students to be able to extend the benefits of education abroad to those who do not have the resources to access these well-researched and powerful educational practices.

More must be done by program developers to ensure that all students recognize the dual advantages of education abroad and global learning outcomes by being realistic about how existing models work, and for whom. It is important, for example, for academic advisors to explain the value of education abroad to all students, not just those who request information. And to do so in ways that all students from underrepresented groups may gain an understanding of the long-term educational and career advantages from participation. We need to frame education abroad and study away within broader conversations about expanding notions of educational and institutional excellence that include effectively addressing the disparities that exist.

A higher education system that prioritizes the study of cultures, global challenges, and equity through education abroad and other global learning experiences can dramatically expand the number of U.S. citizens who develop a global worldview. This in turn can establish a national foundation for broader international and domestic cooperation, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual care and concern. Broadening global learning starts in the classroom, in the broadly diverse communities developed by indigenous people, slaves and their children, and immigrants to the U.S., and the capstone is an education abroad experience. This strategy could start small and grow based on research and assessments of the cost-benefit of improved global learning and improved collaboration across nations. The absence of a coordinated, global strategy to combat the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic is a timely example and opportunity to engage in a problem-based, global learning exercise. It offers a problem-based entry into the classroom to broaden participation in education abroad. This and similar strategies can move higher education closer to making excellence inclusive with respect to global learning and education abroad.

Education abroad and global learning, with their focus on cultural competence, are well aligned with the needs and expectations of an interconnected and interdependent world. They are also powerful models for the kinds of attitudes and aptitudes that are necessary for successful campus change efforts. Institutional team members need well-honed cultural competence in order to engage with multiple stakeholders and make excellence inclusive. Yet, access to such an experience requires that structures be in place to examine and mitigate the cost of this educational experience regularly to better ensure equitable participation. Also needed are means for institutions to address successfully reported negative experiences that are based on racial and ethnic identity and other dimensions of diversity across participant groups.

We hope that the practical suggestions mentioned earlier stimulate rich conversations. They can be summarized as variants on five basic questions that animate the work ahead.

1. Has my institution clearly articulated to students, faculty, and staff the outcomes and benefits of the global learning expected from its education abroad programming?
2. How are education abroad program objectives and global learning outcomes articulated and assessed?
3. How is information gained from the assessment process used to improve the programs?
4. How can these programs be designed and funded to offer equitable access to students who historically have been marginalized and underserved?
5. How might the content and practices of education abroad programs be redesigned to eliminate the inequities that historically marginalized students in the U.S. experience, ensuring they are not replicated or exacerbated in their abroad experiences?

A campus Inclusive Excellence framework should engage a great number of allies across the larger campus community in these questions as it moves explorations of EDI to the very core of definitions and metrics for institutional success. Professionals in the education abroad office should use the RIBS process to identify and align more fully their specific goals and objectives with the general priorities of an institution that is seeking to make excellence inclusive. Once these priorities are aligned, international educators are encouraged to seek help and borrow expertise from their campus allies. These allies include those who are engaged in institutional research, strategic planning, development, retention, academic affairs, financial aid, and student affairs areas focused on advocacy and social activism.

Such strategies can help education abroad professionals, faculty members, administrators, and students achieve the promises made in The Forum's recently released *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* 6th edition, as well as in its newly revised *Code of Ethics*:

We seek out opportunities to engage with diverse populations and perspectives, and do so with patience, understanding, humility, and respect, modelling the behavior we aim to cultivate in our learners. We endeavor to expand access to education abroad, and to create an environment of inclusivity that is open, respectful, and safe for all. We strive for equity in our treatment of all. We do not accept intolerance, and we work to eliminate inequities within our organizations and communities. Shared Values II C—Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. (The Forum, 2020, II, p. 3)

We do not assume that all those who manage the education abroad process and experiences have sufficient human resources to do *all* that is recommended in this chapter. This underscores the urgent need for collaboration across historical boundaries of offices, departments, and programs and institutions. The divisions within the U.S. should signal to the higher education community that we could use more cross-racial/ethnic and cross-cultural interaction within our country. Given that we are a nation made of indigenous people and people from all other nations, we should be able to develop and implement programs in which all students come to better understand the cultures of the world within our country.

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**Authors:** Heather Barclay Hamir, Aileen Bumphus, Patricia Izek, and Betty Jeanne Taylor

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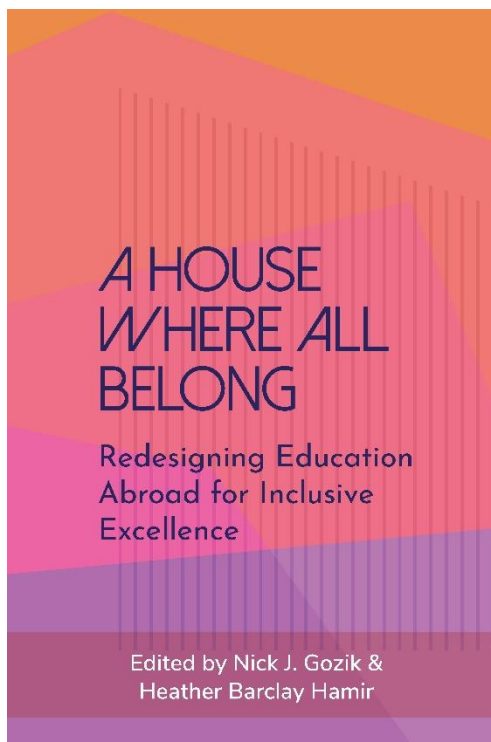
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# 4

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## Inclusion Begins with Us: Developing Inclusive Organizational Cultures and Hiring Practices

**Heather Barclay Hamir, Aileen Bumphus,  
Patricia Izek and Betty Jeanne Taylor**

*By the last week of the program I felt immense loneliness and sadness thinking, 'will there ever be a place where I feel like I belong?' In my solitude, I realized the importance of preparing students of color for the minority experience abroad as well as providing a space for them to unpack their experiences...I longed to not only be heard but understood. (Burrow, 2019, p. 17)*

Efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within education abroad often begin with approaches intended to recruit and enroll increasingly diverse student cohorts. Although that approach may yield a more diverse group of participants, it does not guarantee that they will have equivalent support or guidance, as the opening quote by Western Kentucky University student Ar'Meishia Burrow illustrates, leading to inequitable outcomes from the experience itself. To realize our ultimate goal that EDI informs all phases of the student experience, from recruitment to preparation to participation and reentry, we must focus on the common denominator across all those phases: ourselves. At every stage of the process, the expectations, beliefs, and biases of the individuals involved influence the student experience, as other chapters in this volume demonstrate. To truly advance EDI within education abroad requires active engagement of all staff to unpack



and address implicit biases within the organizational cultures and hiring practices that shape our teams.

To embrace this work in earnest requires a collective acknowledgment of the beliefs that impede progress. Education abroad professionals are often passionate about the value of intercultural learning and embrace interactions with diverse cultures. These tendencies lend themselves to the adoption of EDI in principle as an extension of the core values already present within the profession yet, in practice, we continue to fall short of true adherence. An emphasis on EDI cannot be fully realized without unpacking the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression shape the current state of education abroad, with biases deeply entrenched in seemingly neutral facets of our work.

This chapter is predicated on the belief that all organizations—including those in education abroad—must do the hard work of internal reflection, unpacking implicit biases within our offices and selves to become inclusive organizations that successfully hire and retain a talented, diverse group of employees. As authors, we have experience with organizational change from multiple perspectives, both on a university campus and within a provider organization, and from the perspectives of education abroad, campus diversity and community engagement, and human resources. Collectively, we have significant firsthand experiences illustrating the incredible power of inclusivity within organizations and hiring practices, the challenges that can impede or prevent this work, and strategies described in this chapter to guide those committed to lasting, equitable, and inclusive change.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder, which sparked protests worldwide and the global expansion of the Black Lives Matter movement (Westerman et al., 2020), agreement with the principles of EDI without action to advance it is no longer sufficient. Employees, students, and members of the larger community expect action to materially improve how EDI manifests in the workplace and in their own experiences of belonging. When we are successful in bringing organizational culture and hiring into alignment with an emphasis on EDI, the corresponding change in assumptions, sensitivities, and understanding rapidly elevates work that supports the rich range of student identities across higher education.

The recent national dialogue in the U.S. on racism and anti-racist action has finally sparked real attention on the internal dynamics that must change in our offices and organizations (Charles & Wojenski, 2020; Contreras et al., 2021). This chapter intends to support these efforts through an overview of relevant literature on the value of diverse teams, concrete guidance on how to move toward an inclusive organizational culture, and strategies to address

bias in the hiring process. While the guidance in this chapter relates to systemic issues that impact all historically marginalized groups, the authors reference Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) throughout to elevate attention on groups with long histories of oppression and overt exclusion in U.S. society.

### **Importance of Diversity in the Workforce**

The importance of diversity in the workplace is well documented when it comes to productivity and innovation, which translates into higher functioning organizations (Hunt et al., 2015a; Hunt et al., 2015b). McKinsey's groundbreaking analyses of the impact diversity has in the workplace found that:

The companies in the top quartile of gender diversity were 15 percent more likely to have financial returns that were above their national industry median. Companies in the top quartile of racial/ethnic diversity were 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their national industry median. (Hunt et al., 2015b, p. 7)

Studies have shown that inclusive teams make better business decisions and outperform nondiverse teams (Hunt et al., 2015a; Hunt et al., 2015b), while low gender and ethnic diversity correlate to a significant likelihood to be less profitable than more diverse companies (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020). The same report concludes that, "... an emphasis on representation is not enough; employees need to feel and perceive equality and fairness of opportunity in their workplace. Companies that lead on diversity have taken bold steps to strengthen inclusion" (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020, p. 2). While most education abroad entities are not profit driven like private corporations, they are generally invested in providing the best experience possible for their students. The significance of diversity within corporate teams provides compelling evidence of the richness a diverse education abroad team can provide students. One could also expect that a truly inclusive workplace will lead to an increase in retention. McKinsey also found that an emphasis on inclusion, "... improves employee satisfaction and also reduces conflict between groups, improving collaboration and loyalty" (Hunt et al., 2018, p. 26).

This significance is further reinforced by research on the benefits of treating customer diversity and inclusion as a strategic priority (Deloitte Australia & Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017, p. 12). While respect for customers seems obvious for any service sector, implicit biases and assumptions about individuals may result in students, faculty, or other constituents feeling unwelcome, as if they do not belong. Having a diverse group of employees can help ensure that customers' needs are being identified and met. At the same time, such research points to a conclusion that most companies have made

by now: diverse teams, when that diversity is valued, are more productive and successful. Note that a diverse team is not necessarily one that is easier to manage. In fact, differences may create conflict since not all members will necessarily see eye to eye. Working through those differences of opinion allows space for the creativity that enriches our perspectives and improves our work.

Each year, the college-aged population becomes more diverse across multiple identity groups. In terms of race and ethnicity, the U.S. is projected to become a minority-majority nation within 25 years, with no single racial or ethnic group that represents more than 50% of the population (Frey, 2018). This transformation is driven by the significant increase in diversity within more recent generations (Cohn, 2016; Fry & Parker, 2018). The proportion of U.S. adults who identify as LGBTQ+ is also increasing steadily, rising from 3.5% in 2012 to 4.5% in 2018, due largely to self-reporting among millennials (Newport, 2018). Over the same period, the proportion of the U.S. population with a disability increased from 12.1% to 12.6%, including a significant increase among young adults aged 16 to 20 years (Erickson et al., 2020). Diversity is here, becoming more pronounced with each passing year. This is the context within which education abroad professionals work, and our ability to engage and value students for the strengths they embody will only be as strong as our own awareness, empathy, and experience allows. Looking inward is the first step in resetting our organizations and our professional field to meet the needs of the students we serve.

### **Laying the Groundwork: Developing an Inclusive Organizational Culture**

Given the clear benefits of a diverse team, the trajectory of demographic change, and our field's intention to foster equity, it is imperative that we fully engage with and support diverse individuals for ethical and practical reasons. We know from data and anecdotal evidence that this is not often the case right now, as the quote from Ar'Meishia Burrow illustrates. So, where do we start? We argue that the first step, *before* focusing on diversity in hiring, is to begin by focusing on organizational culture, as articulated in Guiding Principle 4.4 (EDI) of The Forum on Education Abroad's *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, which states that, "Each organization should develop structures to examine, identify, and address systemic biases and deficiencies in its policies, practices, and programs" (2020, p. 25). Completing an internal evaluation to unpack implicit biases embedded within organizations and ourselves not only allows work groups to understand where they may have awareness gaps but

also sets the stage for creating inclusive environments when hiring diverse, talented individuals. Several authors of this chapter are practitioners within the EDI change-agent space and, as a group, we recognize that this is hard work, and that change initiatives often fail because organizations are not nimble enough or are unwilling to unpack their own implicit biases as part of the process. If an internal evaluation is omitted or downplayed, any further actions are likely to be hobbled, if not derailed, by the underlying biases that shape beliefs, expectations, practices, policies, and systems.

There is no one right way to engage in this work. Campus climate assessments, where available, can serve as a useful framework; the less formal evaluations described later can provide similar insights. Campus climate in this context is defined as the current perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that describe the institution and its members (Peterson & Spencer, 1990) specifically as they relate to racial/ethnic diversity, which is composed of perceptions, behaviors, and expectations around issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity (Hurtado et al., 2008). Hurtado et al. (1998, 1999) offer a framework for understanding campus climate as a multidimensional construct influenced by the policies, practices, and behaviors of individuals within and beyond institutions. Several critical elements are particularly influential including the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion, structural diversity, and the psychological and behavioral dimensions of climate (Hurtado et al., 1999). Although this framework is discussed most frequently in the context of race and ethnicity, the core concepts apply when considering how members of any marginalized group experiences their environment.

### **Historical Legacy of Inclusion/Exclusion**

The historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion serves as the foundation of Hurtado et al.'s campus climate framework. BIPOC and other marginalized communities are often far more aware of an institution's historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion than their White counterparts. For much of higher education's history, "[c]ollege campuses across America were literally and figuratively shaped by the blueprints of racism . . . helping to enshrine Jim Crow laws, segregation policies, and discriminatory practices through generations of American society" (McGuire, 2019, para. 3). This history impacts the extent to which members of a college community feel welcomed.

The following are sample questions to consider in unpacking the historical legacies that may influence an office, institution, or community:

- Who originally occupied the land where your institution/organization exists?

- Are there any ties to slavery and racial oppression evident at your institution historically, or enshrined through memorials (buildings, statues) or traditions, including campus anthems?
- How did your institution respond during emancipation, the implementation of Jim Crow laws and segregation, desegregation, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement?

As BIPOC students, faculty, and staff confront systemic racism on campus, they also must engage in academic and social environments that perpetuate false stereotypes, exclusion, tokenizing, and bias incidents. Institutions may ignore that academic, social, and financial levels of support are affected by campus racial dynamics, yet this can negatively impact students' ties to the academic and social arenas of college (Saenz et al., 1999).

### **Structural Diversity**

The next critical element, structural diversity, refers to the demographic makeup of the campus community relative to the larger population, including students, faculty, and staff at every level of the institution or organization, including leadership. When BIPOC do not see themselves reflected in the faculty and staff around them, they are less likely to feel that they belong, particularly if the institution has a history of racism. At the departmental or office level, the degree of structural diversity present among staff, including student workers, can reinforce or undermine a message of inclusion.

Working from this framework, departmental staff can deepen their awareness of the experiences of BIPOC and other marginalized communities by asking the following questions:

- Do your team members (including student employees), education abroad participants, and program materials reflect the campus population?
- For public or regional institutions, do your staff and students reflect the demographics of the region you serve?
- Are you trending toward an inclusive workforce throughout the levels of staff, management, and leadership?

### **Psychological and Behavioral Dimensions**

The remaining two elements of campus climate as defined by Hurtado et al., the psychological and behavioral dimensions, form the fabric of day-to-day experiences on campus. Put simply, "[h]ow people are treated in institutional settings is the product of deeply rooted racialised (and gendered and classed) social practices that shape how they view themselves and the world around

them and how they act in the world” (Powers, 2007, p. 155). Perceptions and interactions may adversely affect working and learning experiences and outcomes, including BIPOC students’ feelings of alienation and lower institutional attachment (Cabrera & Nora, 1994; Hurtado et al., 1996). Those feelings will affect all interactions on campus, including how they perceive education abroad as an activity and as a department within the larger campus. Efforts to advance an EDI mission will be more effective when undertaken with full awareness of these dynamics.

To understand how an office or organization is perceived on these dimensions, consider the following:

- Survey stakeholders about their experience with your department/organization; do any experiences/perceptions run counter to a mission of EDI?
- When reviewing employment and student pipeline data, are specific groups more likely to be over- or under-represented?
- What strategies can you employ that promote the understanding of identity and the sense of belonging for underrepresented students?
- What inherent beliefs may be influencing policy and practice in ways that run counter to promoting EDI?

Common negative interpersonal interactions on college campuses have become known as microaggressions, first described by Pierce (1970) and widely discussed by Sue et al. (2007). The latter define microaggressions as “the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership” (Sue, 2010, p. 24). Individuals and work groups should consider how they perpetuate microaggressions, on departmental and individual levels, as part of their efforts to foster an inclusive organizational culture. Mechanisms for feedback should be provided to better understand how individuals are experiencing the department. Looking at the wider snapshot of university campus climate data, examples of problematic interactions could include stereotyping or tokenizing underrepresented staff and students, for example, through media and communications elements, service on committees, assumptions made about individuals’ interests and experiences, and so on.

Creating an inclusive organizational culture depends on the willingness of the team to be vulnerable. Focusing on the external environment—the history of inclusion or exclusion, even the larger campus or community environment—is the easier area for exploration as it is external to our own

deep-seated beliefs and biases. Internally, unpacking individual biases can be deeply uncomfortable work. However, every person has biases, and the courage to surface them is the only means to create a truly inclusive, equitable, and richly diverse community. Deliberate conversations about power, privilege, and oppression are necessary for understanding their implications and how they manifest within the department. Staff members who have engaged in critical self-reflection regarding their own identities and positionalities, and engaged with others via dialogue, are better prepared to interrogate how diversity is framed within the rhetoric of the department and institution.

The most crucial component of the abovementioned framework is what we do with the accrued knowledge it provides. “Faculty, staff and university administrators, in particular, have the obligation to reflect on their own perspectives and challenge themselves to become catalysts for change” (Taylor et al., 2014, p. 231). Particularly for individuals at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), in which Whites make up 50% or more of the student population, it is common that staff members may be unaware of the privilege their social identity holds, as well as the resulting bias that may be unintentionally informing their work. The campus climate framework creates new avenues to build that awareness and is most effective in tandem with deeper exploration of implicit bias and how it works. Implicit bias, also referred to as unconscious or unexamined bias, “. . . is the unconscious attitudes and stereotypes we hold about different groups of people that influence our actions” (Jackson, 2018, p. 2). Combatting implicit bias is especially important throughout the hiring process, where unexamined biases can disrupt an inclusive process at every stage, from the position description through to the final offer. A tremendous amount of work exists on implicit bias, including practical guides produced by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University (2010), the University of Washington (2010), Harvard University (2011), and Stanford University (2019). As subsequent sections illustrate, efforts to hire and retain a more diverse team will fail without consistent attention on removing and mitigating the effects of implicit biases throughout the process.

### **Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention**

As outlined in the previous section, the introspective work teams do to understand how power, privilege, and oppression influence education abroad lays the groundwork for addressing biases in the hiring process. Even searches that intend to prioritize the recruitment and hiring of diverse candidates,

particularly BIPOC individuals, are challenged to eradicate biases that fundamentally shape the search from the first decisions about the position description. Take, for example, a search in which the hope is to hire a candidate from an historically marginalized community to join an education abroad team. A natural tendency is to list commonly required or preferred qualifications such as an advanced degree and experience studying abroad. Although seemingly innocuous, the impact of those two criteria alone substantially reduces the potential candidate pool. In 2017–2018, BIPOC individuals represented nearly 290,000 (35%) of master's degrees recipients (U.S. Department of Education & National Center for Education Statistics, 2019) and roughly 103,000 (30%) of study abroad participants (Institute of International Education, 2020). What is the likely percentage of individuals who are in both groups, especially considering that in each prior year these proportions were even lower? What percentages are interested in education abroad as a professional field? When we add in other desired qualifications, such as experience in an education abroad office or in higher education to reduce training needs, it is no wonder that searches often fail to identify a strong, diverse candidate pool. This convergence of factors seems to validate a common conclusion that the problem is with the larger candidate pool, instead of acknowledging that bias can impact every element of a search process.

The pernicious nature of implicit biases on hiring is clearly illustrated in a study of efforts to remove gender bias in orchestra hires (Goldin & Rouse, 2000). Orchestra leaders were successful only when they removed names from candidates' materials, set up screens to block evaluators' views of the musicians, and even eliminated the auditory cues made by candidate's footfalls, efforts we might consider extraordinary only because biases are so firmly entrenched in the hiring process. Despite attention on EDI in hiring, anti-Black and anti-Latinx racism in hiring remains largely unchanged over the past 30 years (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003; Quillian et al., 2017). Discrimination in hiring remains prevalent and requires agreement and cooperation among hiring managers and everyone involved in the search process to overcome.

Before discussing approaches to address bias throughout the hiring process, it is important to acknowledge that biases are and have shaped education abroad as a profession. The demographics of the profession suggest that affinity bias plays a strong role in hiring and retention. According to Davis (2020),

Human beings—no matter their race, ethnicity, or religion—are united by a deep-seated desire to belong. . . . As such, we gravitate toward people like us—toward



people who can empathize with our experiences and worldviews. This phenomenon is known as affinity bias. It is our tendency to connect with others who share similar backgrounds, beliefs, and interests. (para. 1)

Education abroad professionals are predominantly White and female (Gordon et al., 2019), serving a disproportionately White, female population of participants at a national level. That replication of identities suggests that there is work to be done both with student-facing *and* internal hiring/culture dynamics to break both cycles, as Charles and Wojenski (2020) suggest. The problem with diversity in hiring is not a lack of good applicants; it is how our own biases prevent us from sourcing and hiring good, diverse candidates. It is imperative that we recognize the bias inherent in our ideas of the “ideal candidate,” which often translates into a candidate much like the persona of the field, for example, a White, female, liberal arts major. Very few hiring managers set out to fill roles with individuals who fit this profile, yet the norms of searches combined with the many subtle forms of bias that influence the process lend themselves to this outcome. Until we view the value add of diverse candidates as the “ideal” we seek, including different lived experiences, perspectives, ways of communicating, and strengths, we will continue to struggle and often fail in our hiring goals. The good news is that change is entirely within our reach through the organizational culture work described earlier, and purposeful attention to disrupting bias in each of the six stages of the hiring process described in subsequent sections: preparing, sourcing, screening, selecting, hiring, and onboarding.

### **Preparing**

Preparing to recruit for a position entails securing approval for the job description and salary range. The job description itself creates opportunities to signal that EDI is embedded in a team’s culture and values through direct messaging about the mission, if overtly referenced, and the priority the team places on engaging diverse constituents. Those elements can be integrated into position functions as well, through acknowledgment that part of the role is to engage with and support diverse groups. Beyond the descriptive, how one handles the remaining elements of the job description will convert words to actions, most directly through position qualifications, but also through salary data, and the inclusivity of language used throughout the job description.

As the earlier example illustrated, some of the most commonplace qualifications in education abroad can be problematic for offices that are serious about hiring a diverse team. In setting qualifications, required and preferred

qualifications are often confused. Requirements should be *essential* to the position, meaning there is no capacity for training once hired; they represent skills or knowledge that a candidate will need on Day 1. In the prior example, study abroad experience is a required qualification to be considered for the position. To test if this is essential or preferred, committee members should ask themselves: What specific skill does study abroad experience bring that cannot be attained by other means? Increasingly, “studied, lived, or worked abroad” is used in searches to expand the potential candidate pool, yet the experiential emphasis still does not make clear what unique skills or competencies are derived by living outside the U.S. If this criterion represents intercultural competence, could that also be present in bi-cultural individuals living in the U.S.? We often establish qualifications that seem logical on the surface as a proxy for a suite of competencies or skills, yet the very experience is exclusionary, making the job qualifications exclusionary as well.

Common requirements that may hinder the goal of a broad and diverse applicant pool include degree requirements, especially advanced degrees, a required number of years of experience, and preferences for specific types of experience if that experience is not a prerequisite to be able to perform the intended work. It is helpful to review the position requirements one by one and ask the following: What skill does this requirement bring to the position? Can this skill be acquired in another way? Requirements should be as inclusive as possible to support the goal of attracting the most diverse applicant pool. Organizations such as NAFSA (2021) and Diversity Abroad (n.d.) provide resources to help identify key competencies versus experience that presumes competency development.

The inclusion or exclusion of salary also impacts who is likely to apply for a position. There is a tendency within education abroad to omit salary from postings, yet it is best practice to include at least a minimum starting salary. Jobseekers reviewing postings are most interested in salary and benefits (Glassdoor, 2018), and listing the salary range gives employers a competitive edge (Lewis, 2018). Failing to include some indication of compensation may hinder efforts to attract the candidates we seek at best and set candidates and searches up for failure at worst.

How position descriptions are worded and what is required to apply are further opportunities to appeal to a broader range of candidates. The phrasing of a position description can attract certain applicants while signaling to others that they do not belong (Born & Taris, 2010; Gaucher et al., 2011). Applications and augmented language services such as Datapeople (2021) and Textio (2021) can help assess preferences or biases that may be

embedded in a job description. In addition, it can help to remember the following regarding language:

- Be intentional and inclusive, using “you,” “we,” and “us” and gender-neutral language
- Avoid idioms, jargon, and acronyms
- Avoid language requirements unless they are required to perform the position. Stating “proficiency in a foreign language” without specification may reinforce a sense of elitism. Alternatives could include “excellent communication skills” or “ability to speak, read, and write professional [specific language] where [specific language] relates to essential job duties.”

When finalizing the position description, it is important to review the application requirements through the lens of inclusivity as a final check. Required application materials should reflect only what one needs to know or understand to screen a candidate. Recommendations or references are not necessary to screen candidates and may exclude individuals when taking into consideration who historically has access to mentors and colleagues who can provide a recommendation (see also Chapter 8 in this volume on applications). For this reason, some searches no longer request references at the time of application.

### **Sourcing**

Hiring managers often feel a sense of urgency to fill a vacant position, yet the desire for speed may be contrary to inclusive hiring. Often, job descriptions are posted on the same job boards and through the same listservs and then search committees wonder why the pool is not more diverse. Although seemingly easier, this is how we replicate sameness in our candidate pools. Sourcing requires time, research, and relationship building. An inclusive hiring process can be slower and more focused on attention to detail to ensure the position is shared broadly, not simply to the usual places that have been used in the past. It is useful to begin by creating a realistic timeline, first figuring out when the new hire needs to start, and then moving backward from that date. If the timing is unrealistic, extend it.

Sourcing ideally starts well before a need to hire exists but, even without that groundwork, new avenues to reach more diverse candidates are available. Personal and professional networks, employee resource or affinity groups on campus, and community organizations can all be potential resources for recruitment. Relocation is expensive, and individuals already in the area may find a new opportunity attractive. In addition, one might

consider reaching out to institutions known to graduate diverse students to share positions on their job board. Strategies to build those relationships could include visits, virtual or in-person, or internship placements with two or more students/candidates at a time to leverage the benefit of a cohort-style experience. Individuals with little or no representation want to make connections, and this will allow them to connect and potentially join the institution or organization in the future.

Within education abroad, Diversity Abroad's job board allows employers to reach a diverse audience interested in employment in the profession while the annual conference provides opportunities to connect with a broad range of talented and diverse people with a shared commitment to EDI. Sessions and interest groups related to EDI occur at several international education conferences, providing additional resources and colleagues with whom to network. Opportunities to welcome newcomers to the field present another space in which to be both a good ambassador for the profession and develop an expanded network. One never knows who will be searching for a position or have a colleague who is searching at some point down the road.

### **Screening**

Screening can be a step that unintentionally eliminates the very candidates the committee seeks. From this point forward, the full search committee is typically engaged through the rest of the hiring stages, which requires a shared commitment to interrupting unconscious bias. To help bring awareness to bias and how it works, it is important to provide unconscious bias training to everyone involved in the process, ideally before discussing specifics about the search itself. In initial meetings, the search committee/team should discuss the goals for the search and the priority placed on bringing diverse perspectives to the team; establish a plan for dealing with or omitting social media, as it creates tremendous potential for biases to influence the committee; create a screening rubric aligned to the required qualifications listed for the position; and have screeners review the previously determined essential requirements, those necessary for Day 1 of work, to maintain focus on stated requirements when completing the rubric. At this and each subsequent stage in the process, the committee should be clear about what actions will be taken if the process does not yield a strong slate of diverse candidates.

Assuming the composition of the candidate pool meets the objectives for a richly diverse pool and screening can begin, screeners should attempt to screen for "inclusion" rather than "exclusion." The goal is not to narrow the

applicant pool rapidly, rather it is to retain a broad, diverse candidate pool that meets the established requirements. There should be less elimination at this stage than may have occurred in previous searches. When possible, it is best to wait until all applications are in and the position is closed to begin screening in order to give all applicants the same unbiased opportunity.

The screening phase can be particularly challenging as the desire to secure a hire increases as the search moves forward. This sense of urgency can lend itself to a parallel assumption that, if the pool is not diverse, it is unlikely that a new search will yield better results because qualified diverse candidates are not available. It is necessary to address this assumption to disrupt the cycle of searches that end with hires that look remarkably similar to previous hires. In moving forward, the committee/team should keep in mind that implicit bias can be difficult to eradicate. To avoid this pitfall, one should ask, "This candidate was just screened out, did bias influence that decision?" and continue to monitor numbers and percentages of the pool's diversity to correct course throughout the process. This is not an easy process and is time-consuming. However, this work is crucial to move the best qualified candidates into the next stage of the process, the final selection.

### **Selection**

With a healthy pool of applicants who meet the requirements, making them qualified candidates for the position, the final selection process is ready to begin. Options to refine the candidate pool to a reasonable number of finalists including phone, virtual, and in-person interviews. All three present their own risks with respect to potential bias. A phone interview would seem unbiased, yet a wide range of implicit biases manifest when we hear someone speak and instantaneous reactions can influence decisions (Anderson et al., 2014; Toy, 2019). The virtual video interview presents additional considerations, including who has access to a quiet, uninterrupted environment and the necessary broadband, not to mention the ease to present themselves naturally in the virtual world. Not all candidates may feel comfortable showing their surroundings. These factors speak to privilege.

In-person interviews also have opportunities for bias to encroach. Employers tend to evaluate how a candidate might assimilate into the culture, which reflects a preference for "cultural fit" versus "cultural add" in hiring (Rivera, 2012). Hiring for cultural fit is another manifestation of affinity bias. It is essential to consider instead which candidate is the best "cultural add," able to expand the team's perspectives to attract and serve an increasingly diverse population of college students. LinkedIn's (n.d.) checklist, "Interview

questions to check for cultural add,” suggests inviting candidates’ reflections on their unique contributions to existing work groups, their observations of your office culture and values, and their thoughts on possible improvements.

Multiple studies show that a structured interview process using the same questions in the same order asked by the same interviewer(s) helps diminish bias (Brecher et al., 2006; Pogrebtsova et al., 2019). Consistency allows the committee to understand each candidate’s strengths and potential gaps based on the same topics, instead of the idiosyncratic conversations that emerge in unstructured interviews. Scheduling time to debrief as a group immediately after the interview call allows the committee to compare notes while the interview is fresh, including asking clarifying questions to evaluate whether bias played a role in assessing the candidate’s responses. Norming discussions about the influence of biases in the search before and during the hiring process can help remove the stigma of its presence while strengthening the process and its outcomes.

Interviews present an opportunity to explore the candidate’s understanding and commitment to EDI while also demonstrating the hiring manager’s and team’s own commitment. It is important to have at least a question or two around these vital topics. How candidates answer can reveal whether they understand the role EDI plays in the profession and whether they are ready to be allies and advocates in this arena. Portland State University’s (n.d.) “Interview Questions Regarding Diversity” guide offers helpful sample questions. At the same time, BIPOC candidates and others passionate about EDI are eager to see how the organization/hiring team values diversity. Valuing diversity is more than what is conveyed verbally and in writing; candidates will also assess whether they see others with whom they can identify, both in the organization and nearby, and whether diverse identities are represented among leaders as well as staff. As McKay and Avery (2006) note,

[I]t may be reassuring for minority job seekers to encounter other in-group members. A minority presence within the organization may signal that the organization values diversity and does not discriminate. Likewise, a minority presence in the surrounding community may signal that the community values diversity. (p. 402)

Both parties are interviewing each other, yet candidates considering relocation are also evaluating how comfortable they will feel in the new environment. This might include accounting for factors such as access to relevant goods and services. Being open and prepared to offer resources for smoothing the transition is an important step in welcoming diverse hires to the community. The lessons of the pandemic and an extended period of

working remotely also point to opportunities for candidates to ease their way into a new community through virtual transition activities.

One final aspect to consider: Often, search teams work hard to ensure that there is a diverse candidate at the final stage of the process to consider for hire. Everyone will usually feel accomplished in bringing a missing voice forward for consideration. However, research on gender bias in hiring shows that, if only one diverse (i.e., female) candidate is in a final pool of four, the diverse candidate effectively has a zero chance of hire (Johnson et al., 2016). It is best to have more than one diverse candidate at the selection stage of the process to offer an opportunity for hire and counteract difficult-to-detect biases influencing the process.

## **Hiring**

Once the search is complete, bias has been mitigated to the greatest extent possible, and an offer is ready to be made, it is time to think about “retention.” The way that the offer is presented and communicated will influence the candidate’s perception of how they are valued. For the most positive candidate experience, it is important to:

- Emphasize the benefits, especially those most important to the candidate. Mention the use of holidays, especially if flexible, and share the less visible benefits of employment in the department and institution or organization.
- Make explicit connections that signal the candidate will feel supported as an employee. Provide a list of campus organizations, affinity groups, or community groups to all candidates and offer to make connections. Ask if they are interested in a mentor and provide one if they are.
- Learn about their interests and demonstrate interest in their professional development.
- Anticipate a counteroffer and see it as a positive move from the candidate.
- Be transparent about the probation period and assessment. This demonstrates that one sees the candidate succeeding and as part of the team.

An inclusive work environment is one where an employee feels seen for who they are, heard by others, and truly valued. There is no better place to confirm the inclusive workplace than at the offer stage and in the next stage, onboarding.

## **Onboarding**

Onboarding may seem like an unusual place to think about turnover, yet it is the foundation upon which employees build investment in their work

and team. When hires result in turnover, it costs about one-third of the position's salary through lost productivity, knowledge loss, and search-related expenses (Agovino, 2019). Year after year, research also shows that over three quarters of those losses are preventable (Mahan et al., 2020). Onboarding is an opportunity to reinforce that a new employee made the right choice in accepting the offer. This involves engaging key stakeholders in the process, as well as having existing staff take the lead in reaching out to the new employee and getting to know them.

It is also important to reinforce inclusivity within organizational culture by “managing perceptions about fair treatment and access, facilitating assimilation through mentorship and affinity groups, and training and holding managers accountable for creating inclusive cultures” (Grillo & Kim, 2015, p. 4). Onboarding should include clear information on how the organization reinforces an inclusive organizational culture. If an onboarding module or framework does not exist, it can be helpful to develop one session for all employees so that the entire team has shared expectations of community behavior.

For those engaged in remote work, onboarding is especially essential in retaining a new hire (Mauer, 2020), beginning with the technology necessary for success in the position, training modules, and structured opportunities for members of the team to connect with the new hire. Offering mentorship and connections to affinity groups, if available, can be valuable, including professional associations that may be applicable as well as the potential for attending conferences in the future. A manager can share how assignments are given and the opportunity for career development. Holding managers accountable for creating inclusive cultures may prove to be more of a challenge, and they may need help. An internal group dedicated to EDI can serve as a resource, potentially offering an opportunity for learning and growth around these topics for the entire team to reinforce and expand the shared journey toward being an inclusive, equitable organization.

## **Conclusion**

While this chapter focuses on offering tangible steps that individuals and teams can pursue to build an inclusive organizational culture and hiring strategy, it rests on the assumption that collectively we will do the work to unpack and disrupt our own biases. The implications of this work are profound for the profession: Imagine how even our application process for education abroad might change if we used the strategies described here. What will the profile of our employees be like if we can eradicate bias in



hiring? How will our conscious and subconscious “ideal candidate” shift, and what would happen if every hire was a cultural add hire?

The answer will vary for each institution, yet the likely commonality is change toward more inclusive organizations that better align with the needs and interests of our increasingly diverse younger generations. The process of self-examination, both personal and organizational, requires a level of introspection that may at times seem difficult, though it is already a growth process with which we are very familiar. Year after year, this introspection is exactly what we ask of our students to help them set aside their cultural assumptions, check their instinct to evaluate local cultures based on their inherent cultural preferences, and reflect on what they are experiencing in order to grow and adapt. This is a deeply personal and sometimes painful process that can feel threatening to the student’s worldview, and it is fundamentally the same process that we, as educators, must also pursue to unpack the biases and structures that impede the realization of truly inclusive organizations and hiring practices.

The tangible outcome of this process allows for a more innovative education abroad team that benefits from its collective staff diversity. Long-standing programs are refreshed while new and future programs are positioned to attract more students from a more representative range of backgrounds and cultures. The rich diversity of these cohorts in turn deepens the learning for all as they form richly diverse communities who learn from and with each other in the new cultural context of their program. It is a journey to reach that end goal yet, as Ar’Meisha Burrow reminds us, even when we fall short, that only means we must work harder, for the sake of the students we strive to serve, the colleagues within our organizations, and the larger society to which we all belong.

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