Planning Beyond the Pandemic: Assessing the Value of Alternative Exchange Programs

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Team Introductions

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Communication Studies; Jyväskylä, Finland

Camryn Vaughn
Political Science, Russian; Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Problem

• How can we increase accessibility and representation in intercultural exchange programs?

• Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on International Education: move to virtual and domestic exchange

• The goal: Make intercultural experiences accessible to as many students as possible and motivate them to take advantage
AEPs

Alternative Exchange Programs
Domestic Exchange

- Service-learning, volunteering, or internship opportunities with cultural components
- Broader intercultural perspectives result of emphasized cultural differences
- Cultural differences
  - rural vs. urban
  - ethnic or linguistic populations
  - indigenous cultures
Virtual Exchange

• Existed pre-Covid but now increasingly used
• Case studies have demonstrated increased communication skills, intercultural competence and more (Otto, 2018, p. 92)
• Impossible to fully replicate immersion experience but still valuable supplements to education
Access and Representation
Barriers to Participation
Barriers AEPs Address

Barriers to Studying Abroad

Again, finances rank as the largest barrier for students when considering education abroad experiences.

- Financial Barriers
- Mobility Barriers
- Greater Participation From Under-Represented Groups
- Lack of Awareness
Supplements, Not Substitutes

- Increased intercultural competence, achieved through:
  - Human development
    - Students adapt to unfamiliar environments
  - Intercultural communication
    - Students interact in an intercultural context
    - Highlighting cultural differences and facilitating discussions
Solution

Survey, Story Collection, and Toolkit

WHAT INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

VIRTUAL? IN-PERSON?

DOMESTIC?

NEW QUIZ AND TOOLKIT ON THE EDU. ABROAD WEBSITE
Student Survey

• Interest in domestic, in-person experiences while COVID prevents mobility

• Majority did not know where to find information about AEPs

• Website as the best way to find information about global experiences
Advisor Survey

• Student interest is there

• Majority not currently aware of AEPs at UM
Toolkit: Available Soon on the UM Global Engagement Webpage

Quiz
What type of exchange is right for you?

Value of AEP's
Quotes, photos, descriptions, examples

Resources
UM offices and organizations to contact
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