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BEYOND ABROAD

BEYOND THE LECTURE HALL: CREATING AND NAVIGATING AN INCLUSIVE EXCURSION ABROAD

Enabling study abroad opportunities
for the many, not the few

–

A Session by Paul Raby, Asia Exchange

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WHO WE ARE

- Affordable Study Abroad-Provider
- Established in Finland in 2007 by two former exchange students
- Support students in their mobility projects (application, visa,...)
- 10 000+ students from 100 countries
- 13 Asian Host Universities
- 2 Latin American Destinations
- 4 European Destinations

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AGENDA

- DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN STUDENT MOBILITY
- BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVITY
- CASE STUDY
- SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER INCLUSION IN STUDENT MOBILITY

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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN STUDENT MOBILITY

- Studying abroad is a **unique experience** that should be **accessible for all**
- Mobility **barriers** exist and **discourage** some student groups from studying abroad
- The creation of **inclusive** mobility programs is the key to lift these barriers

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WHAT STUDENT IDENTITIES ARE WE TARGETING WHEN TALKING ABOUT INCLUSIVE MOBILITY PROGRAMS ?

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STUDENT IDENTITIES

1. Low income students
2. LGBTQ+ students
3. Race & Ethnicity
4. Religion & Spirituality
5. Students with Disabilities
6. First generation students

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BARRIERS IN STUDENT MOBILITY

- When preparing to study abroad, students can be confronted with **obstacles** that can create difficulties and **reduce their motivation.**
- Because of these challenges, many students **don't even consider** the possibility of studying abroad, convinced that such an experience may **not align with their identity**

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WHAT MOBILITY BARRIERS CAN DISCOURAGE STUDENTS FROM STUDYING ABROAD ?

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STUDENT MOBILITY BARRIERS

1. Discrimination
2. Financial situation
3. Culture & Language
4. Visa & immigration policies
5. Facilities and infrastructure accessibility
6. Lack of support (home institution/family)

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BARRIER EXAMPLES IN ASIA EXCHANGE DESTINATIONS

LGBTQ+ students

- Bali & Malaysia: conservative social attitudes are prevalent toward LGBTQ+ students
- It can lead to discrimination and harassment
- In Malaysia, homosexuality is even criminalized and there are no Malaysian laws that protect the LGBTQ+ community against discrimination

Students with Disabilities

- Accessibility may be a significant concern, as infrastructure and facilities for people with disabilities can be limited in some countries
- Difficulties with transportation, accommodation, access to certain parts of the city, and sometimes, even within the university
- There may be a lack of awareness and support for students with disabilities. They might need to advocate for themselves and work closely with their host institution to ensure necessary accommodations.

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CASE STUDY

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

A LGBTQ+ student wants to study 1 semester in a non-friendly country toward LGBTQ+ community where harassment is occurring.

How would you support the student with his project and what actions would you implement?

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A student, who uses a wheelchair, would like to study abroad but feels like it wouldn’t be possible because of his physical condition.

How would you support the student with his project and what actions would you implement?

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

A student coming from a low-income family is very motivated to study in Asia, but he fears his financial situation won't allow him to fulfill his dream.

How would you support the student with his project and what actions would you implement?

SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY **BEFORE** STUDENT MOBILITY

Collaboration and communication with partner universities is the key

Offer a variety of program options (different length, more affordable, different content,...)

Promote study abroad possibilities using inclusive communication / adjust promotional material

Organise Pre-departure Orientation:
culture differences, health & safety information

Inform student about local support service (partner university contact, buddy program...)

Promote Scholarships and Financial Aid

SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY **DURING** STUDENT MOBILITY

Organise Welcome program during the first days of the semester

Encourage open dialog between you, your students, and the partner staff to create a secured environment for the student

Offer local language learning opportunities

Offer Student Support Service:
24/7 emergency support, channel to report incident

SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY **AFTER** STUDENT MOBILITY

Obtain Feedback after the mobility:
student experience, quality of support received, any incidents to report

Use student feedback to constantly improve your student inclusivity efforts & organise follow up sessions with partner

Evaluate the impact of the inclusivity initiatives and measure the satisfaction and success of students from diverse backgrounds

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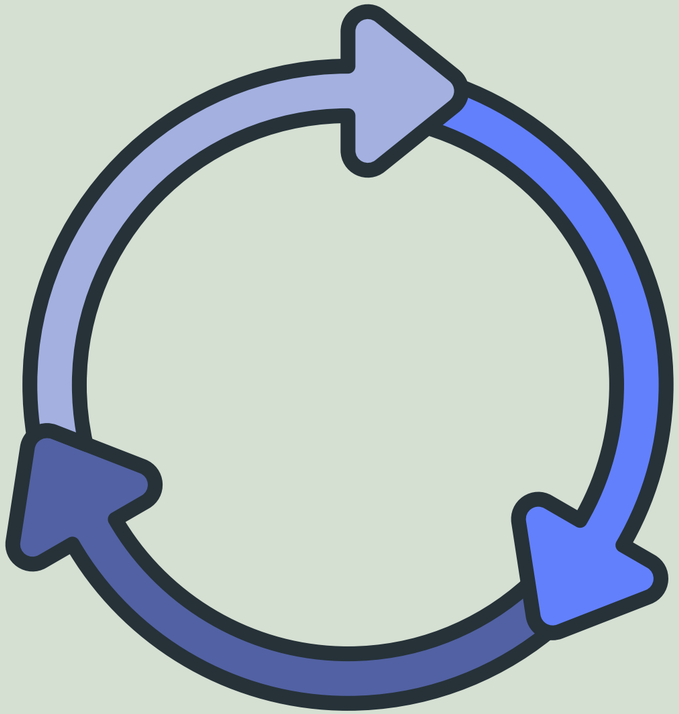
GOAL : ALL STUDENTS SHOULD BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES THAT THEY CAN BE MOBILE

+ INCLUSION



+ STUDENTS ABROAD

+ ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE WORLD

- CONFLICTS IN THE WORLD

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THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

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