

One Brave Step



★ Global improvements happen through small, brave decisions to stretch beyond one's comfort zone. The accumulation of those small actions leads to creative solutions, greater understanding, and even global healing.

“The international experience in Hong Kong influenced my goals to work alongside tribal policymakers who are passing legislation to support Indian Country. It was there that I also became inspired to visualize how I could share my culture, my values, and my vision to inspire others to act on efforts to protect Mother Earth.”

- Malia Simon, 2019 Cultural Vistas Fellow with an internship at CarbonCare InnoLab in Hong Kong.
Malia is a Member of the Diné (Navajo) Nation.

In 2019, indigenous college student, Malia Simon, took an extraordinary chance on herself and her community. She traveled across the world from her home in Northern New Mexico to Hong Kong for a climate justice internship.

It was a brave step for the Environmental Studies major. As part of the 2019 Cultural Vistas Fellowship for under-represented students in global exchange, Malia made her commute to the CarbonCare InnoLab each morning.

While Malia carried within her a passion for environmental advocacy long before she arrived in Hong Kong, **it was through the Cultural Vistas Fellowship that she made the links between community advocacy, policy work, and ultimately what inspires others to make a difference with you.**

Malia's Story Is Rare: But It Doesn't Have to Be

How can we ensure that young leaders like Malia can take the risks necessary to help solve complex global issues?

What kind of global challenges could be tackled if we created accessible pathways where young adults could practice crossing the borders of their own experience, culture, language, work and home environments?

A bridge to access must be built: **an agent must inspire those who are under-represented for whatever reason to cross the bridge; and resources must be directed to sustain the impacts on those who courageously say yes to global engagement.**



As the world becomes more complex and connected, new ways of working demand new skills and competencies: collaboration, adaptability, cross-cultural understanding, fluency in foreign cultures and languages, and creativity. One of the most effective ways to hone these skills is through immersive global experiences.



The Problem

According to a recent report, there are many complex reasons why young adults like Malia don't participate in international exchange experiences.

Underrepresented students are more likely to be first-generation college students and/or from low-income backgrounds; the cost of studying abroad might be a financial burden.

Students lack a network of trusted individuals, knowledgeable and supportive of studying abroad.

Anticipated racism and racist encounters abroad can be a reason for underrepresented students avoiding studying abroad.

Difficulty finding study abroad programs and locations of interest given that the top destinations are Western European countries

The low participation rate in global work/study programs by young adults from historically marginalized communities makes it difficult to ensure young professionals on global leadership tracks bring a diversity of perspectives to the table. Communities, companies, and others are the poorer for it and risk sustainability, especially since the U.S. is diversifying faster than anticipated, according to the 2020 census.

If the U.S. is to continue as an active, relevant, and effective leader on the global stage, we must cultivate a diverse corps of rising leaders who are as globally fluent as possible. We need to significantly expand and diversify the pipeline of individuals who participate in global experiences to do this.

PROBLEM

Lack of Inclusivity,

whether because of race and ethnicity, social and economic barriers, cultural values, or even national and geographic boundaries.

SOLUTION

Bridge to Access

Bridge to Access increases equitable access to overseas learning and career development opportunities for American participants from underrepresented backgrounds. A large disparity of global engagement and global career advancement is rooted in both a lack of access and a perception by diverse students of all types that these experiences are not for them.

OUTCOME

Inclusive access

to international experience means a larger variety of perspectives at the table to find solutions to global challenges.



Bridge to Access is a collection of Cultural Vistas initiatives aimed at increasing equitable access to overseas learning and career development opportunities for American participants from underrepresented backgrounds.

Bridge to Access is the Solution

A Bridge to Access will be built on the strong foundation of **Cultural Vistas' agile and innovative programming experience and track record of increasing diversity in international exchange**. Over time and with sustained investment, this bridge will disrupt bias in workplaces and communities, close major gaps in diverse global leadership, and open possibilities for creative solutions to complex global challenges.

Bridge to Access includes three components: capacity-building, programming, and public engagement:

1 Capacity-Building

Scholarship Fund for Diverse Voices in Global Exchange

Eliminating the financial burden of transportation, housing, and daily cost of living while abroad by quadrupling scholarships available over the next three years.

Preference is given to students historically excluded in international exchange. This includes, but is not limited to, Pell Grant recipients; veterans; first-generation college students; STEM majors; members of minority communities within the United States; and non-traditional students.

Supportive Network and Resources for Participant Success

Though the financial barriers are significant, mindset barriers can be just as daunting. We will address the social-emotional barriers to access by building Cultural Vistas' internal capacity to support participants more effectively.

Develop a support system for students to build confidence and overcome unique challenges while abroad. This will require intentional effort to develop and work with partners like Diversity Abroad to build a curriculum and wrap around resources/tools to support the participants as well as provide staff training.

2 Programming

Expand global experience destinations to Africa and Central/South America

Cultural Vistas has partners in each of these regions and with more concerted effort can scale opportunities in these destinations and make them more prominent and culturally relevant for participants; this is crucial to the evolving global geopolitical and environmental configuration.

Scale Cultural Vistas' STEM LAUNCH and Citizen Ambassadors programs into countries such as Ghana, Botswana, Nigeria, and Rwanda, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Panama. STEM LAUNCH adds an international educational and career path experience for HBCU students (historically black colleges and universities). Citizen Ambassadors Program brings individuals together who share a common professional focus, for an in-depth international exchange.

Programming continued ...

The Engaging Rural and Small-Town Voices in Global Leadership Program

Cultural Vistas will contribute to ongoing efforts to attract attention to the growing bifurcation of rural-urban America and the unique needs of small towns by developing a program to address this less-discussed access gap in the international engagement mission.

We seek to engage rising young leaders from small towns with 50,000 or fewer residents for virtual and in-person experiential learning. Preference is to applicants who represent marginalized populations within their community. The outcome will be an Inclusive Economic and Social Development Action Plan, crafted by these young leaders, identifying how their community can use inter-cultural competency practices to grow economic opportunity.

3 Public Engagement

Bridging Worlds: A Cultural Vistas Public Engagement Initiative

Cultural Vistas is committed to authentic engagement. We are interested in moving from the safe position of making statements from afar to positioning ourselves in the heart of difficult conversations about access in global exchange.

We will convene alumni, donors, partner organizations and corporations, and interested friends through social media, the Cultural Vistas' website, events, and a podcast.

A new kind of leadership is required. As global challenges become increasingly complex calls for a bold vision to develop global leaders that can unite to help solve the world's most pressing challenges.

Bridge to Access Investment Opportunities

★ Scholarship Fund for Diverse Voices in Global Exchange	\$250,000
★ Supportive Network and Resources for Participant Success	\$250,000
• Hire a Senior Advisor for Inclusive Global Leadership to forge partnerships	\$130,000
• Develop support services/resources, and advance programming	\$10,000
• Continue to build ICDEI competency in our leadership, board, and teams	\$10,000
• Consultancy to ensure Learning Outcomes are integrated into programs	\$10,000
• Evaluation tools developed to track desired outcomes	\$100,000
• General/flexible support to free up dollars for access initiatives and capacity-building	
★ Expand programming to Africa and Central/South America	\$100,000 (per location)
★ The Engaging Rural and Small-Town Voices in Global Leadership Program	\$260,000
• Administrative Expenses – staffing, marketing/communications, operations (ICR)	\$116,000
• Program Expenses – travel, materials, events/meetings, contractual	\$144,000
★ Bridging Worlds: A Cultural Vistas Public Engagement Initiative	\$40,000
	Annual Total
	\$900,000

Why Cultural Vistas?

Cultural Vistas has earned the trust of funders, participants, partners, and more than 150,000 alumni.

Born in the 1950s as part of an international cooperative undertaking to rebuild war-torn Europe, Cultural Vistas has grown to be one of the largest and oldest organizations of its kind.

Cultural Vistas is an established leader in the international engagement sector due to our commitment to a culture of innovation and continuous learning. **Our 30+ programs equip leaders of all kinds** to address the world's most pressing challenges in creative and collaborative ways.

Our extensive experience includes inbound and outbound exchanges between the U.S. and Western Europe, skill-building internships and study tours, professional training, and teacher exchanges – and collaborations such as:

- Seed grants to advance conservation efforts in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Journalism fellowships to combat the spread of disinformation.
- Building diverse cultures of remembrance and inclusion in public spaces.
- A Citizen Ambassadors program for participants with a common professional focus.

Cultural Vistas' Strategic Plan & New Vision

Understanding the world is the first step to changing it...and we understand.

In response to the global pandemic and profound social awareness around diversity issues, Cultural Vistas developed a 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan. This plan allows the organization to live its values and walk its talk.

“...this strategic plan articulates an important pivot for Cultural Vistas. We have a responsibility to do more than build individual careers. We want to play a more proactive role in galvanizing our community, our expertise, our programs and our resources to make a positive and impactful difference in society in all that we do.” – Jennifer Clinton, CEO, Cultural Vistas

Cultural Vistas is stepping forward with a new vision to increase access to global experiences and continue to live out our ICDEI commitment by:

Developing inclusive practices in all programs.

Attracting “ethical consumers,” who are characterized as interested in organizations that reflect their values of diversity and inclusion and desire for social impact.

Becoming the non-profit of choice for ICDEI-sensitive funders.

Modeling a workforce that fosters a shared understanding and appreciation of diverse peoples, values, cultures, and aspirations internally.

Join us!

Together we can transcend the divide with the Bridge to Access initiative.

Together we can build an inclusive bridge that will close the gap and change the dynamic of access to global learning experiences. Our efforts will create a generation of diverse leaders with intercultural competence skills that will bring the world closer together.

For more information or to make an investment, contact Anna N. Hutto • ahutto@culturalvistas.org