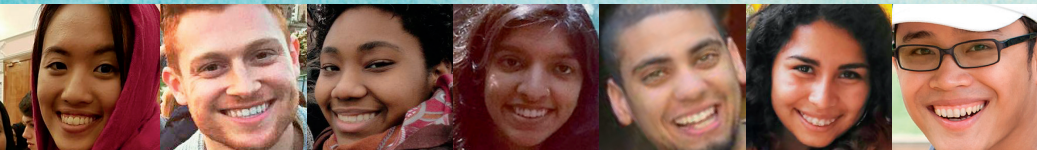


THE MANY FACES *of* STUDY ABROAD

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WITH API ALUMNI







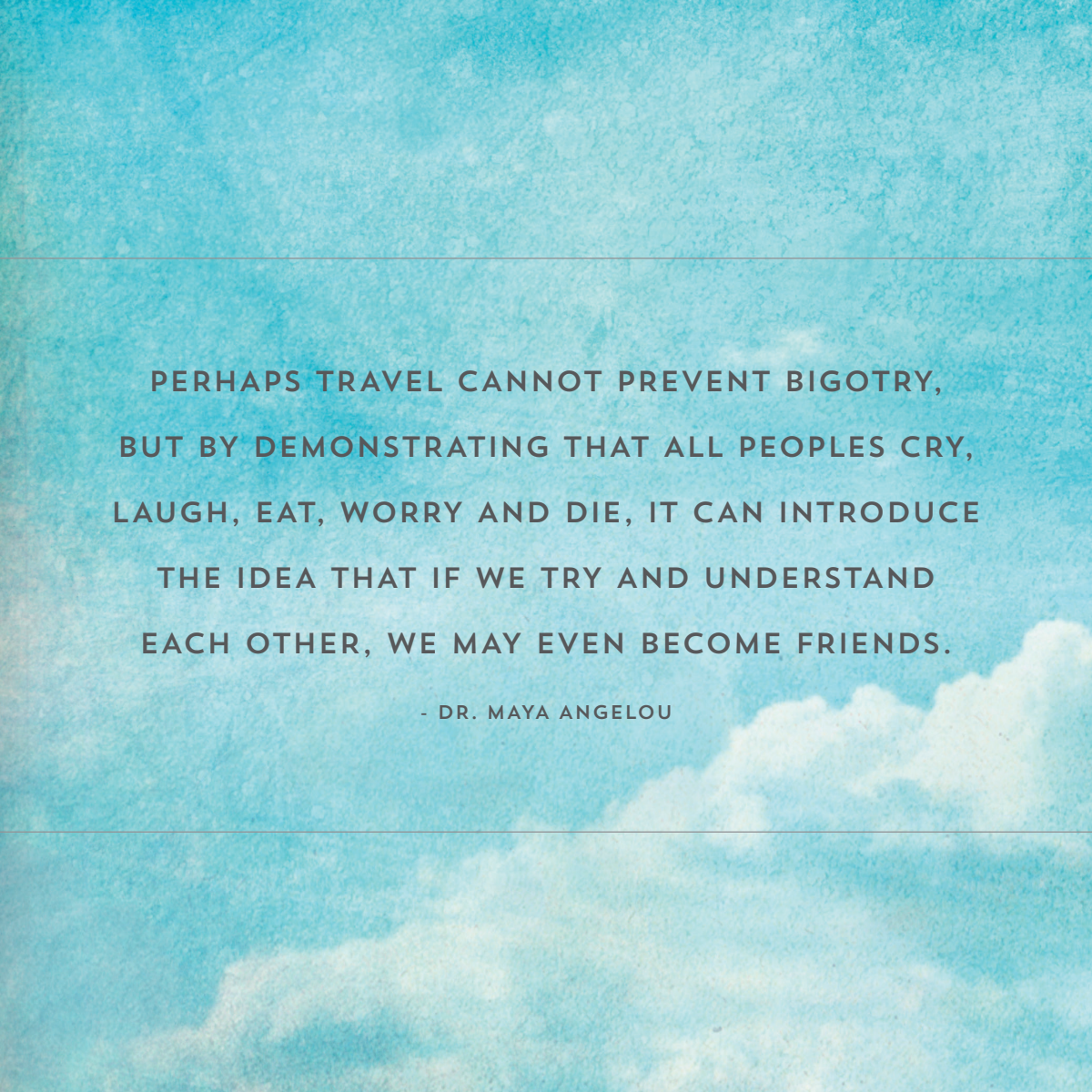
GROW

LEARN

TRANSFORM

API BELIEVES THAT INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE. WE WANT YOU TO SHARE YOUR PERSONAL STORY WITH THE WORLD AND TO LEARN FROM THE STORIES THE WORLD HAS TO SHARE WITH YOU. API IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES TO PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS. WE ONLY REQUIRE THAT YOU GO ABROAD WITH AN OPEN MIND, AN OPEN HEART, AND AN EAGERNESS TO LEARN. API IS THERE TO SUPPORT YOU THE WHOLE WAY - BEFORE YOU GO, WHILE YOU'RE THERE, AND WHEN YOU COME HOME.

IN THIS BROCHURE, YOU'LL FIND STORIES FROM A GROUP OF DIVERSE API ALUMNI WHO OVERCAME OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES TO GO ABROAD. WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU DO THAT, TOO. MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ARE LISTED ON THE BACK OF THIS BROCHURE.



PERHAPS TRAVEL CANNOT PREVENT BIGOTRY,
BUT BY DEMONSTRATING THAT ALL PEOPLES CRY,
LAUGH, EAT, WORRY AND DIE, IT CAN INTRODUCE
THE IDEA THAT IF WE TRY AND UNDERSTAND
EACH OTHER, WE MAY EVEN BECOME FRIENDS.

- DR. MAYA ANGELOU



SIMONE BIASUZZI

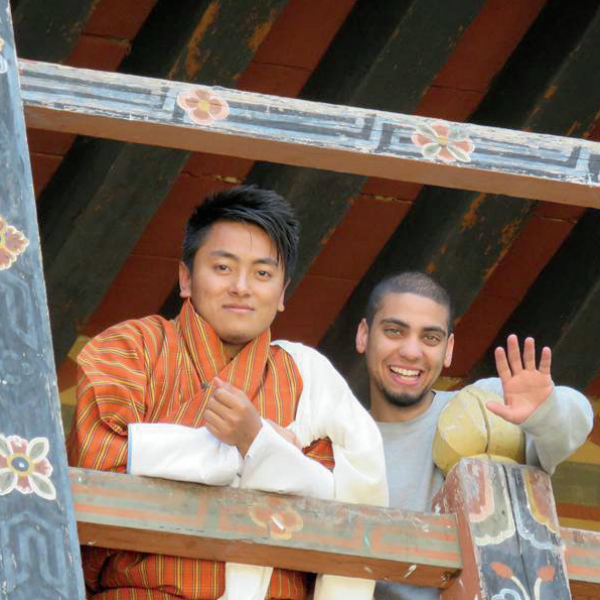
API GRENOBLE, FRANCE

Going into to study abroad with an open-mind about how I may be perceived as a black, Bahamian female with an American accent helped me respond with resilience to obstacles I encountered.

Prior to [leaving], I reached out to several people at my university who had studied in France. I wanted to compare different experiences and gauge similarities among their stories. I questioned my study abroad advisor at my university and close professors about the hard, real-life issues that people do not easily talk about, like stereotypes and racism. Through my conversations, I became aware of my own perceived notions about the French and the stereotypes that I unintentionally held. Thinking of stereotypes they may have of me and being aware of how I may be perceived was something that I tried to be mindful of.

Once I arrived, my API Resident Directors gave an on-site orientation that described cultural expectations and etiquette that we should keep in mind for different social situations. I tried my best to assimilate into their culture, while not losing my personality and myself in the effort.

I was able to share and talk through challenging moments I encountered with my host mom. My strategy of keeping an open-mind in turn became my best defense.



BENJAMIN CONCEPCION

API THIMPHU, BHUTAN

Fewer than 10% of American students study abroad. The Institute of International Education's Open Doors data shows that 78% of U.S. students who studied abroad in 2010-11 were white. According to both statistics out of the 10%, 8% are white students studying abroad. That only leaves 2% of the non-white American students who study abroad. I am of Dominican descent. Out of the 2%, how many are Latino like me?

This is why I wanted to study abroad. I wanted to completely break out of my comfort zone, I wanted to challenge the odds, go for what in my mind seemed impossible and go for a dream I had since starting college.

On campus, the stereotype threat many oppressed groups face is a common obstacle [to study abroad]. This includes many self-fulfilling prophecies that can hold back the individual from even trying to study abroad. In my case, I see Bhutan as a dream come true because I used to believe it was impossible for a student like me (1st generation, low-income, Hispanic) to study abroad. It takes a lot of courage for a non-privileged student to go to the [study abroad] office for those resources.

In my personal life, I live for learning. By living my life this way, I believe it gives me the edge to practice leadership. When I learn something valuable, I immediately think of ways of teaching others so they can use it in their lives.



COURTNEY SMITH

API MADRID, SPAIN

One major concern I had before departing for my journey was whether or not I would effectively integrate into the culture. That is, if I could call Spain my 'home' during my stay in the country. A subset of this anxiety was created from my intermediate understanding of the Spanish language. I feared that I would never be able to verbally communicate with the locals and that I would be reduced to a wallflower. When I arrived in Madrid, I was faced with all of my fears at once; I quickly recognized that I was the only African-American in the group. I felt like an outsider in a subgroup of outsiders. One way that I was able to resolve this concern was just by simply being outgoing and adventurous. I forced myself to talk to Spaniards in restaurants, bars and malls. I exchanged contact information with locals to build relationships that would allow me to converse and build my language skills. My most important action was to observe. I observed the environment and how the locals interacted with each other.



ARIANA PEÑA

API BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

As a first-generation college student, I saw the chance to study abroad as a once in a lifetime opportunity that I could not afford to pass up. I made the decision to study abroad because I believed that it was one of the only times in my life where I would genuinely be immersed in a new culture and experience day-to-day life like a local, while also furthering my academic studies. I chose to study abroad because I believe that experiencing life outside of the comforts of your home country and native language are crucial for personal growth, humility, and self-globalization.

I would describe my international experience to my grandmother as a time where I learned something new everyday. Whether it was learning a new phrase or word in Spanish that made getting around the city that much easier, or learning which side of the street I needed to be on to catch the right bus for school, every day was new and exciting...I would [also] describe my international experience as a true test to my independence and probably the semester of college where I learned the most about myself. This experience abroad made me feel more prepared for life after graduation and made me realize that if I can spend four months of my life in a place where I barely speak the language, I can do just about anything.





EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON
WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

- NELSON MANDELA



AMIT KUMAR

API MADRID, SPAIN

I was a bit surprised when I peered around the corner of the cashier's window to see who had just taken my order for a lunchtime kebab. Although the Spanish she'd spoken to me had sounded as Iberian as any I'd heard during my time in Sevilla, the cashier was a woman of Asian descent. She alternated back and forth between languages when talking with the other staff at the café, but other than that she blended right into everything that felt Spanish about the place. As a minority studying abroad, I took heart in seeing how seamlessly this woman assimilated into the Spanish culture; it was an occurrence I'd seen repeated in Spanish schools and small stores already. Part of the reason I'd wanted to study abroad was to get away from the community I'd grown up in, and to explore a place with different racial attitudes. And during my time abroad, I found both some positive experiences, like the friendly kebab cashier, and some experiences that made me feel better about the state of racial relations back in the U.S. All in all, I returned home with a greater understanding of what it means to be a minority in the US. As a result, I returned more comfortable in my own skin as well.



MARYLOU GARCIA

API BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

My experience living abroad has given me an advantage in my professional profile that sets me apart from most of my colleagues. In my current job, I am an outreach coordinator for a non-profit organization. I have this amazing opportunity to work with educators, probation officers and social workers, to promote our program to youth who can benefit tremendously from our services. On a daily basis, I speak with teenagers from all walks of life that are looking for support.

As a mentor, I have the ability to talk to an at-need teen on a level that allows us to share our experiences so that we can better connect and I can provide them with a safe outlet. I mentored a high school senior that needed additional support aside from our program. We had very similar backgrounds: both of us were first generation (which can sometimes cause a cultural barrier among parents and their children), both grew up in a very traditional household with older male siblings. Being able to talk in depth about my experience away from home and abroad really began to help her see that her goals were achievable. She is currently in her first year at a local community college, learning how to drive, and planning to transfer to a 4-year university to study psychology. Being able to serve as a positive role model to participants in our program has been one of the most rewarding opportunities I have had in my professional life. To me, there is no greater success than seeing someone else reach his or her goals.



RUTH MANZANARES

API CÁDIZ, SPAIN

It had always been a dream of mine to travel the world. For the longest time I didn't think that dream would come true because as a first-generation and low-income student, I didn't have the luxury to be able to travel and explore the world. I am a first generation college student. My parents were immigrants from Nicaragua and though they continuously worked hard and encouraged me to do my best in school, they didn't know how. So from a young age I had to take the initiative to do well in school and find the resources that would allow me to go to college. I knew that in order to fulfill my dreams and to make my family proud, I had to work harder than others and needed to take the lead. When I found out that my financial aid covered studying abroad expenses, I knew that I had to take advantage of the opportunity being presented to me...I knew that this time would be the best time to travel and that studying abroad would allow me to learn about the world in ways I wouldn't had I stayed in the U.S.

Coming to Spain and traveling around Europe has really shown me not only how little I had seen before, but how big and diverse the world really is. Navigating through different cultures and trying to integrate yourself in them can be an equally rewarding and lonely experience. However, once you overcome that sense of loneliness, being abroad becomes something amazing, even magical. Being abroad, in short, is the ultimate learning experience. You learn so much about yourself, about what you want from life, and about what you are capable of achieving with the opportunities that are presented to you.



API RESOURCES

DIVERSITY RESOURCES

apiabroad.com/diversity

API INCLUSION AND ACCESS COMMITTEE

API's commitment to inclusion and access is enhanced by the work of this committee, tasked with developing resources to better support our participants and staff and to ensure we are consistently meeting inclusive excellence standards set by the field of international education.

SCHOLARSHIPS

apiabroad.com/scholarships

API AND JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

The API-JCU Diversity Scholarship provides one full tuition award per session abroad to an outstanding minority student participating in the John Cabot University Program in Rome, Italy.

API FIRST GENERATION SCHOLARSHIP

API is pleased to support students who are the first in their families to attend a college or university. The First Generation Scholarship award ranges from \$250 to \$750 per session.

API DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

API is proud to provide a diversity scholarship in order to support students from a variety of backgrounds. The API Diversity Scholarship award ranges from \$250 to \$750. Students must be one or more of the following: a U.S. military veteran, a non-traditional student (30 years old or older), a student with a disability, a minority student, student athlete, STEM major, first time traveler, international student studying abroad in the U.S., and/or a LGBTQ student.

API GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP MATCHING

The Gilman Scholarship Program offers awards for undergraduate study abroad and was established by the International Academic Opportunity Act of 2000. This scholarship provides awards for U.S. undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two-year or four-year college or university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide.

CONNECT WITH API ALUMNI

Before you go, talk to someone who has been there. When you return, share your story with other students and be a part of API's alumni network.

alumni@apiabroad.com • apiabroad.com/alumni

LEARNING TRANSFORMED. LIFE TRANSFORMING.

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