

# World Learning

World Learning programs enhance visitors' knowledge, deepen their understanding of the US and its people, and introduce Americans to the world beyond.



Photo by Irawan Nugroho

## International Professional, Academic, and Cultural Exchanges

Bridging differences through citizen diplomacy

Actively engaged on a daily basis in promoting global understanding “one handshake at a time,” the World Learning Visitor Exchange Program (formerly Delphi International) facilitates citizen diplomacy through exchange programs for adults and young leaders.

World Learning draws on more than three quarters of a century of experience in intercultural education, and the Visitor Exchange Program (VEP) has been developing customized professional study tours of the United States for more than 25 years on behalf of the US Department of State. Working through the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of International Visitors and Office of Citizen Exchanges, US Embassies abroad, and private sector partners, VEP creates programs to enhance visitors' knowledge and deepen their understanding of the US and its people as it introduces Americans in towns and cities to the world beyond.

VEP is responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of exchange activities. Programs can be geared to the needs of just one visitor or for groups of up to 40, with itineraries ranging from a few days to three weeks or more, and including visits to different regions of the US.

Each year, VEP develops programs for some 900 visitors from more than 140 countries in partnership with citizens in nearly 100 urban and rural communities across the US. To date, VEP projects have benefited not only more than 15,000 international visitors, but also many times more Americans with whom they have come into contact.

### International Visitor Leadership Program

Professional exchanges provide opportunities to learn from and engage with American professional colleagues in multiple US cities as well as take part in social and cultural activities.

- A group of **South African legal and social workers** learned about best practices to prevent domestic violence and gender abuse during a three-week visit to the US. Their exchange included meetings with officials, academics, and professionals in law, medicine, and social work; visits to NGOs and shelters; volunteer opportunities; homestays; and travel.

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■ **Asian journalists** participating in the annual Edward R. Murrow Program had firsthand opportunities to explore the rights and responsibilities of a free press and US media practices, trends, and challenges. Their tour included briefings on US foreign policy-making, meetings with prominent journalists, visits to major broadcast and print news services, and the chance to learn about civic life in smaller communities, as well as a visit to the Newseum news museum and dinners in Americans' homes.

■ A three-week program introduced a **human rights leader from an indigenous community in Indonesia** to human rights protections, respect for minority beliefs and cultures, and civil rights in the US. After meeting with government officials, academics, and human rights representatives in Washington, DC, he traveled across the country to learn about challenges facing diverse US communities.

■ Nine Iraqi women participated in a program for **Women as Social, Political, and Economic Leaders**. They met with elected women leaders and women entrepreneurs, learned about women's rights, and volunteered to feed the homeless on Mother's Day. A highlight was a meeting with former First Lady Laura Bush to discuss her decades-long work on breast cancer prevention.

## Citizen Exchanges

Two-way citizen exchanges create long-term links among individuals, institutions, and countries.

For example, English-speaking **adults who work with minority communities in Denmark** received training in areas including youth leadership and teambuilding at World Learning's SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont. They then traveled to Denver, Colorado, to see real world applications of these approaches at organizations and agencies that work with immigrants, minorities, and young people. Five months later, an American team visited Denmark to participate in additional trainings and follow-up activities, including a short conference.

## Youth Leadership Programs

Youth leadership development and high school student exchanges provide a deep and meaningful introduction to American life, culture, and institutions. Homestays, travel, and other experiences help students learn firsthand to communicate across cultures and develop leadership skills.

In one recent example, 35 **Brazilian Youth Ambassadors** ages 15–18 came to the US for a two-week educational exchange designed by VEP staff at the request of the US Embassy in Brazil. The highly interactive program combined examples of citizen involvement, volunteerism, leadership, and education. Activities ranged from a United Nations simulation of global issues and a workshop on making good judgments, to photojournalism and hip-hop workshops, homestays with American families, and university campus tours.



*Photo by Diane Bondareff*

Action plans created by participants from a VEP **Serbian Youth Leadership Program** have resulted in community service projects such as first-ever recycling programs in local high schools; multicultural diversity training for elementary school students; and new after-school enrichment classes for youth with interests in art, language, and computers.

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World Learning, a nonprofit education, training, and exchange provider, works globally to enhance the capacity and commitment of individuals, institutions, and communities to create a more peaceful and just world. Founded in 1932, World Learning runs international development programs, study abroad, and graduate education in more than 70 countries, with participants from more than 140 countries. Development priorities include civil society and governance, education, HIV/AIDS, international exchange, and capacity development and training. US-based in Washington, DC, and Vermont, the organization has annual operating revenues exceeding \$100 million.

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