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### Study Away for the Differently Abled: A Study Away Program for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Emily Huydic

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STUDY AWAY FOR THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED:

A STUDY AWAY PROGRAM FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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PIM 78

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

August 10, 2020

Adviser: Dr. Alla Korzh

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Student name: Emily M. Huydic

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## ABSTRACT

Study Away for the Differently Abled is a seven-day program for young adults aged 18 through 25 who have documented Intellectual Disabilities. During this program, they will live on Yale University's campus in New Haven, Connecticut, USA, to develop independent living skills while also interacting with and learning from Yale international students. Study Away for the Differently Abled is grounded in the social approach to disability, aiming to extend access to quality intercultural post-high school programming to young adults who are not able to attend traditional college programs nor travel internationally through study abroad programs.

To ensure that the program was planned with all potential participants' unique needs in mind, a needs assessment was conducted using surveys and interviews with family members of young adults with Intellectual Disabilities. The needs assessment made clear the need to keep the location of the program within the United States, within reasonable driving distance from the participants' home community, and focus heavily on independent living skills as well as the intercultural element.

Based on feedback from the needs assessment, the program will take place at Yale University and participants will be recruited from Connecticut. Participants will spend ten weeks leading up to the on-campus portion developing independent living skills and preparing to live on campus. Once on campus, international Yale students and program participants will engage in a week of cultural learning and experience living on a college campus. At the end of the program, participants and international peers will put on an International Fair to share what they have learned. Overall, the program will provide differently abled young adults with a college-living and intercultural learning experience, as well as provide international Yale University students with the opportunity to learn from their differently abled peers.

### **Learning Objectives**

As a professional in the special education field for the past five years, I have gained experience in working with people of varying abilities, becoming acquainted with their families, and witnessing their triumphs as well as setbacks. Throughout my time as an International Education graduate student, I have learned how important intercultural experiences are for both academic and personal growth. By completing this Course Linked Capstone, the objective was to learn how to incorporate my experiences in special education working with the differently abled population with my passion for intercultural and experiential learning. I aimed to provide that valuable experience to those who are not usually given the opportunity due to intellectual and/or physical limitations. Further, I wanted to learn how different theories regarding cognitive and personal development and cross-cultural learning experiences are put into practice for this population. Overall, my goal was to combine all I have learned in my graduate experience into a comprehensive, practical and necessary program design for the most differently abled population. In order to reach these goals, I have created a new program for the American Institute of Foreign Study (AIFS) based in Stamford, CT, to add to their wide variety of study abroad programs offered nationwide.

### **Key Terms**

Some key terms that will be used frequently in this paper which are important to define are explained below:

<i>Key Term</i>	<i>Definition/Explanation</i>
Severe Intellectual Disability	A label given to individuals with an IQ lower than 40 who require extensive, lifelong support in adaptive functioning skills (i.e. daily living activities, learning, communication).
Social Approach to Disability	The perspective that disability is a social construct; this approach views disability as an inadequacy of society to address the needs of individuals with different abilities than

	the traditionally defined norms. It is the opposite of the ‘medical approach’, which views the disability as the individual’s problem to live with within “normal” society. This paper is rooted in the ideology of the social approach to disability.
Differently Abled	Based on the social approach to disability’s ideology, this paper will use the term “differently abled” rather than “disabled” when describing individuals with a diagnosed disability to reflect the view that this population has different abilities, not a lack of abilities.
Study Abroad	An educational experience where students leave their home country to study in another country.
Study Away	An educational experience where students leave their home community, but not their home country, to study.
Caregiver	A person who provides full-time care to a person with a severe disability that cannot perform activities of daily living (i.e. feeding, toileting). In this paper the term refers to a person outside of the family who is hired to provide full time care.

### **Introduction**

The benefits of having an intercultural experience have been studied, discussed, and proven over the past sixty years. Dating back to 1954, Allport (2012) “proposed that prejudice held by one group toward another group could be reduced if individuals from both groups participated in sustained interpersonal contact” (p. 71). Since then, much research has been done and the study abroad industry has grown exponentially. Today, we see the impact of studying abroad in “cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal capacities,” including awareness about cultural differences and sociohistorical cultural contexts, adaptability and flexibility, and empathy to “seek deeper understanding while withholding judgement” (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2012, p. 72). As such, study abroad experiences are “ideal for reducing prejudice, developing intercultural competency skills, and improving relations across cultural, ethnic, and/or national differences” (Sell, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005 as referenced in ASHE Higher Education Report, 2012, p. 73). These lessons gained from studying abroad translate into



valuable life skills that the participant returns home with. It is easy to see, then, why multitudes of study abroad programs have been developed over the past half-century.

In fact, the IIE Open Doors Report 2019 shows that almost 350,000 American students studied abroad for academic credit in the 2017-2018 school year, which was an increase of 2.7% from the previous year (IIE, 2019). In addition, there was a reported almost 40,000 students who participated in non-credit-bearing studies abroad including internships and volunteer opportunities. This shows that not only are a great number of American students studying abroad during their college careers, the number continues to increase year to year, underscoring its educational value. Furthermore, these numbers do not include the great numbers of students from other countries who study abroad in the United States.

Despite the positive research findings and corresponding data showing how many students are accessing study abroad, there is a population of people who very rarely, if ever, get to have this experience. It has been proven that people with different abilities of all types face many barriers to traveling, so that even when there is a desire to travel, they cannot (Darcy, 1998).

For the purposes of this project, it is important to define the type of disability being discussed. This project will focus on young adults with varying Intellectual Disabilities (ID), sometimes referred to as cognitive disabilities, and most commonly recognized as such diagnoses as Down's Syndrome, though this is not the only nor the most common diagnosis. This project is intended for all young adults with varying severity of ID, but most participants will likely fall into the low range of "mildly impaired" to "severely impaired" categories, which I will further explain in the discussion of relevant literature.

As a brief definition of the term for context, a person diagnosed in the “severely impaired” category of ID will have an intelligence quotient (IQ) below 40 (where average is between 90-100), and have deficits in daily living abilities resulting in the need for extensive support for their full lifetime. For example, these individuals usually do not perform activities of daily living such as dressing, feeding, or toileting themselves independently, and require one-to-one assistance throughout the day. Some of these individuals may have limited to no reading or math ability, verbal speech or social skills.

While there is legislation in place in many countries about physical accessibility and educational access for students with different abilities from birth through age 21 (most usually provided by the public school system), there is little in place for young adults who have aged out of these programs and yet cannot access traditional university programming. Many young adults with the “severely impaired” ID label between the ages of 18-25 (common college-age) are exited from formal special education programs and left with few structured opportunities for further learning or careers. Many parents feel at a loss as to what to do next in order to help their child, now a young adult, become more independent and lead a ‘normal’, productive life.

Furthermore, although “all U.S.-based international exchange organizations are required to make their programs inclusive of people with disabilities” (Mobility International USA, 2018), for people with more severe intellectual differences, it can be extremely hard, if not impossible, to find a ready-made program that includes the amount of support needed, as well as other peers with similar needs to travel with. Large institutions dedicated to increasing access to study abroad for people with different abilities, such as Mobility International USA, Diversity Abroad, the Association on Higher Education and Disability, and Abroad with Disabilities have many tips and advice for students with invisible differing abilities (i.e. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder, ADHD) or physical disabilities (i.e. vision/hearing impairments) that are still accessing higher education and are able to advocate for themselves. However, none of the listed organizations provide programs specifically for people with severely different intellectual abilities, nor do they address how this population would access any type of study abroad programming, especially if they are not attending an academic institution. With this project, rooted in the social approach to disability as described in detail below, I aim to begin to address this gap in programming.

This work is in fulfillment of the capstone requirement for a Master of Arts degree in International Education at SIT Graduate Institute, following the Course Linked Capstone project model related to the Program, Planning and Design course. For this capstone project, I developed a study away program designed for young adults aged 18-25 years old who have been labeled as Intellectually Disabled. The program is aimed toward fostering communication with same-aged peers of another culture, independent living skills, and personal maturation through experiential learning. The program could be implemented by the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS), who have many resources, skilled employees, and experience with planning and carrying out study abroad and study away programs for a wide demographic of participants. In what follows, I present background information on AIFS in order to describe its ability to implement this prospective program and its current lack of any similar type of programming. Then I discuss the relevant literature on the benefits of study abroad versus study away and on disability and its impact on travel in order to situate the proposal in context. Finally, I outline my needs assessment, program goals and objectives, and draw final conclusions.

## **Background**

The American Institute for Foreign Study was created in 1964 when a founder's wife, a high school French teacher, wished to bring her students to France and found that no such program or organization willing to run such a program existed (AIFS, 2018b). From there, the organization was born and has since grown into a major provider of international education experiences. With the mission "to provide the highest quality educational and cultural exchange programs to enrich the lives of young people throughout the world," AIFS is committed to "teach[ing] young people from all over the world to understand each other's qualities, values, and differences" (AIFS, 2018a). Branches of the organization include Au Pair in America, AIFS College Study Abroad, Academic Year in America, Summer Institute for the Gifted, Camp America, Cultural Insurance Services International, AIFS Customized Faculty-Led Study Abroad, American Council for International Studies Educational Tours, and Global Experiences (international internships for undergraduate students). AIFS College Study Abroad is offered only to students currently enrolled in a credit-bearing university program of study, and their purpose is to acquire college credits while abroad. Similarly, the Global Experiences program is for graduating or recently-graduated college students looking for career experience through international internships. Au Pair in America, Academic Year in America, and Camp America are all programs that bring international people into the U.S., and ACIS is geared toward a younger population of students. What AIFS does not have, however, is programming targeted toward the differently abled population. With this being said, it is possible to adapt the current AIFS Summer Institute for the Gifted programming to address this gap in program offerings.

The Summer Institute for the Gifted (SIG) is a program that brings gifted students between the ages of nine and 17 to universities, where they live on campus while taking courses. The program aims to give younger, dedicated students a real-life college experience. AIFS runs

SIG programs throughout the summer months on university campuses across the United States. Because this program is already so well-developed, it lends itself nicely as a jumping-off point for a program dedicated to individuals with special needs. For example, the partnerships between AIFS and the host universities are already well established, risk and crisis management plans are already in place and practiced, and a basic structure is in place. The aspects of the program then need to be adjusted for the specific needs of differently intellectually abled persons but does not need to be invented from scratch.

AIFS was chosen as the provider for this program due to a number of factors. First, as previously mentioned, they currently run a program that could be adjusted to suit the needs of this unique population without needing to “reinvent the wheel.” Second, they are located in a geographic area that is well suited for implementing a program such as this one. AIFS’s main headquarters is in Stamford, Connecticut, which is close by to New York City and New Haven, CT, with hundreds of colleges in the surrounding area. Due to this geographic proximity to so many universities, AIFS already has numerous university partnerships where they run programs, including the SIG program. Another benefit to AIFS’s Stamford location is their proximity to highly rated public-school districts within Fairfield County, CT, which attract families with children with special needs due to their outstanding special education programming. Therefore, there is a large population and active community of families of children and young adults with special needs. This community is constantly advocating and creating experiences for special needs individuals, which means that they would likely be interested in having their child attend a program such as this. Overall, AIFS’s expertise in their various program areas could be combined to provide the type of program with necessary accommodations, staff, and curriculum the differently intellectually abled population requires.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

The benefits of having an international experience are proven by many years' worth of research and are manifested through huge numbers of study abroad program offerings and participants. One underlying foundational theory describing the impact of study abroad is Gillespie, Braskamp, and Dwyer's Holistic Model of Education Abroad (2009). This theory outlines the positive impact on personal development of international educational experiences and helps underscore its importance for young adults of traditional college age. Equally important to the theoretical grounding for this proposed program, though, is Darcy and Buhalis's book *Accessible Tourism* (2011), which details the barriers faced by people with different abilities of all sorts. Based on these two competing theoretical foundations, a compromise can be made in order to address the need for a more easily accessible program type for people with different intellectual abilities: study away, as explained by Sobania and Braskamp (2009). It is important to acknowledge the theoretical bases in international education for people with different abilities in order to overcome the barriers the industry currently imposes on them and plan an appropriate program for this population. To illustrate both the benefits of studying abroad and the barriers faced by the differently intellectually abled population in doing so, I have analyzed the Holistic Model of Education Abroad as well as the concept of accessible tourism. Finally, I give a detailed explanation of the Intellectual Disability label to fully contextualize the level of ability experienced by potential participants and address how the concept of study away programming can be a viable solution to the barriers this population faces to intercultural education experiences.

### **The Holistic Model of Education Abroad**

The Holistic Model of Education Abroad generally posits that “education abroad offers an ideal setting for students’ significant learning and development” (Gillespie, Braskamp, & Dwyer, 2009, p. 444) due to the fact that while abroad, students are constantly engaged with the unfamiliar- new places, types of people, ideas and information that they have not previously been exposed to in an immersive way. All of this unfamiliarity causes the sojourner to “test themselves, and, in the process, discover something new about themselves and their potential” (p. 445). The experience, then, becomes a “journey [of] personal change” (p. 445), serving to develop the person in more ways than just academically. Holistic student development theory “proposes that an educational setting should address the individual’s intellectual growth as well as her personal growth to enable the student to mature and become a full participant in civil society” (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Braskamp, Trautvetter, & Ward, 2006; Kegan, 1994; Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007 as referenced in Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2009, p. 446).

The Holistic Model of Education Abroad identifies three grounding questions based in three developmental areas that individuals of traditional college age grapple with as they mature. The developmental areas identified in the theory are the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), which together “create an understanding of self and others and enable a person to act on that understanding” (Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2009, p. 447), driven by the questions, “How do I know? Who am I? How do I relate to others?” (Braskamp, 2007 as cited in Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2011, p. 447).

In terms of cognitive development, answering the key question “How do I know?” the authors propose that, in a global learning situation, students not only learn to identify differences in cultural perspectives, but also learn the importance of these differences in society. The goal of intellectual growth is met by studying abroad due to the experience of constructing and applying

new knowledge outside of the traditional school classroom. In fact, the Holistic Model of Education Abroad states that “in the study abroad environment, they [students] are drawn out of their learning ‘comfort zone’ to test another form of intelligence [...] and to use other styles such as direct experience and experimentation to reach an intellectual understanding” (p. 448). When abroad, students must use knowledge and traits that are not developed in a classroom, such as flexibility and adaptation, a “tolerance for ambiguity,” resourcefulness, and resilience, among others (Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2011, p. 449).

In addition to the cognitive dimension, the Holistic Model of Education Abroad examines the interpersonal (answering, “How do I relate to others?") and intrapersonal (answering, “Who am I?") dimensions. While studying abroad, the student develops language skills, including cross-cultural communication and the ability to adjust their behavior based on the cultural context they are in, which are paramount in interpersonal development and communication with others, not only in intercultural situations. By developing these skills while abroad, the student returns to their home country with a greater ability to connect with all types of people they will encounter in life. Additionally, the student returns home with a greater sense of self. Time abroad encourages the sojourner to question their previously held beliefs by putting them in a situation outside of their comfort zone. Kegan (1994, as cited in Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2011) states, “by questioning, they begin to construct a set of ideals, purposely aligning themselves and identifying with a community” (p. 448) instead of blindly relying on information given to them by others. Having an experience in a completely new place surrounded by unknown people and being exposed to different ways of thinking causes the sojourner to question “the values and beliefs that supported her or him through adolescence” (Gillespie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2011, p. 448) helping them to mature more fully and become the individual of their own choosing.



The Holistic Model of Education Abroad gives a detailed account of how an international and intercultural experience benefits the student in three main ways - cognitively, interpersonally, and intrapersonally. The theory shows that in spending time abroad, a person develops as a whole, and returns home with a greater sense of clarity as to their personal beliefs in addition to new academic knowledge. They have used multiple methods of intelligence to create and apply new learning and are more open-minded and tolerant of differences among people. This is a strong theory that supports the need for college-aged students to have an intercultural learning experience. In my research of the relevant literature on study abroad, I could find no research done on study abroad with regards to people with different abilities of any nature. This underscores the importance of a program such as this one, so that individuals with different abilities who are often barred from traveling abroad (as explained below), and therefore deprived of the opportunity to develop in the ways discussed by the Holistic Model of Education Abroad, are able to obtain this type of valuable learning experience in a way that is appropriate for them. This program could provide valuable opportunities for research in the area of study abroad or study away for those with different abilities and begin to close the gap that is evident in this area.

### **Accessible Tourism and the Barriers Faced by Individuals with Disabilities to Travel**

As discussed above, the benefits of traveling and studying abroad are clearly proven, for those who can access it, providing a strong argument for college-aged students to have an international and intercultural learning experience. Unfortunately, there is a population of individuals who are rarely able to have such an experience. The differently abled population, ranging from different physical to intellectual abilities, face a multitude of barriers to

international travel. The book *Accessible Tourism* by Darcy and Buhalis (2011) outlines why this is, beginning with the discussion of Disability Theory.

Traditionally, different abilities were viewed with the “individual or medical approach” (Darcy & Buhalis, 2011, p. 24) which focuses on the loss of ‘normal ability’ the individual has, based on “physical or cognitive limitations,” and is considered “their ‘tragedy’” (p. 24). This approach views disability as the individual’s problem to deal with, not the responsibility of society to help them work around. The World Health Organization (WHO) contributed to this view by defining “disability” in medical or health related terms, focusing on the impediment – “the loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function” (p. 24) – and the resulting disability – “any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an action in a manner, or within the range, considered normal for a human being” (p. 24). The WHO lists the ‘normal’ functions of a human being, which is then used to determine that the person who cannot perform all of these functions is “disabled”. For example, if a person is in an accident and receives a spine injury which results in the loss of movement in their legs, the loss of leg movement is, by the WHO’s definition, an impediment – the loss of anatomical function. As a result of this impediment, the person is bound to a wheelchair because they cannot walk on their two legs, which is the ‘normal’ human behavior. Therefore, the impediment of the loss of leg movement has caused a disability of paralysis. Because so many nations are members of the WHO and set stock in their standards, this approach to different abilities and ensuing mindset became the predominant view, affecting “every sphere of social organization for disabled people. It is these definitions that create the dichotomy of normal/abnormal and, hence are the origin for considering disability as other” (pp. 24-25). It is easily seen in everyday life, even today, that people with different abilities are viewed as

abnormal and, as such, their lives revolve around working around the standards set for ‘normal’ people. They are routinely “excluded from social participation and the rights of citizenship” (p. 25) in many ways, not the least of which is the right to travel.

Alternatively, the “social approach” to disability looks at “human health from a broad perspective,” including “physical health, emotional well-being, and social cohesion” (Darcy & Buhalis, 2011, p. 25). The focus is on providing “services and supports in order to remove or minimize social and environmental barriers to full social, physical, and leisure participation,” making the problem of differing ability not the individual’s “tragedy,” but an inadequacy of society in supporting the “particular needs of people with disabilities when compared to the whole of society” (p. 25). The social approach holds that “disability” is a social construct, supported by a disabling physical environment created by society as well as “prevailing hostile attitudes that oppress, exclude, and marginalize disabled people from social participation” (p. 27). Social organization causes the ‘dis’ability, not the impairment itself, because social organization is “based on a non-disabled interpretation of what is ‘normal’” (p. 27). Therefore, “disability is imposed on top of their impairment, not because of their impairment, but due to socially constructed barriers and attitudes” (Barnes, et al., 1999, as cited in Darcy & Buhalis, 2011, p. 28). The social approach to ‘dis’ability rejects that “people with disabilities are in some way ‘defective’ from the benchmarked...norm” and posits that “if disability was more commonly recognized and accepted in the way that society designs environments or systems, it would be regarded as normal and it would enable a more inclusive way of life for people with disabilities” (p. 28). Overall, the social approach aims to change the mindset that people are “disabled” because they cannot access the society in the way that it has been organized and built, not by

fault of their own, but by fault of a society that did not take into consideration the wide variety of needs their population has as a whole.

In terms of travel, the medical approach to different abilities has had a hugely negative impact. Swain *et al.* (2004, as referenced in Darcy & Buhalis, 2011) discuss the “disabling barriers” to travel faced by people with different abilities as “a product of historical development” which dictate how “people with impairments are treated by society” in a certain culture (p. 29). Due to the fact that, historically, the predominant view of people with different abilities was informed by the medical approach, “many tourism environments are disabling by nature” (p. 31). Barriers to travel for the differently abled population include physical and attitudinal hurdles. Physical barriers are easy to see, such as accessible transportation, accommodations, and attractions. From arriving to the destination to traveling within the location to leaving to return home, travelers with physical limitations will face multitudes of barriers during their trip. Even with accessibility legislation in place in many countries, private ownership of infrastructure, attractions, accommodations and natural spaces (i.e. nature parks/preserves) make physical accessibility an obstacle, as they are not necessarily held to the same standards as publicly or governmentally owned spaces. Finally, attitudinal barriers make travel hard for people with different abilities. This includes the negative perceptions of “disability” that keep differently abled people out of the planning and building process in the first place. Darcy and Buhalis state that “travel agencies were perceived to hold negative attitudes, and the overall perception of certain service providers was that disability and taking holidays was incompatible” (McKercher *et al.*, 2003 as cited in Darcy & Buhalis, 2001, p. 55). These negative attitudes toward people with different abilities also exacerbates the barrier of a lack of information. Due to inexperience with people with different abilities, travel agencies and

their packaged tours “often do not meet the needs of disabled people” (Cavinato & Cuckovich, 1992; McKercher et al., 2003 as cited in Darcy & Buhalis, 2011, p. 55) and the information people with different abilities receive is “inaccurate and incomplete due to difficulties in obtaining all disability-related information crucial for trip planning” (Cavinato & Cuckovich, 1992; McKercher et al., 2003 as cited in Darcy & Buhalis, 2011, p. 55). People in charge of planning travel for those with different abilities have to believe that the differently abled *can* travel, otherwise they will not be able to serve them appropriately. In addition to this, the providers need to be knowledgeable of the needs of their clientele, the concerns of their guardians, and be intentional about the services their organization can offer in order to meet those needs. Unfortunately, because the number of people with different abilities seeking travel opportunities is smaller than the majority demographic, most tourism providers do not use their resources to address this population.

In conclusion, it is clear that accessible tourism is an area that needs to become a focus in the tourism and international education industries in order to provide the same opportunities for travel to all demographics of people, regardless of ability. When comparing these facts to the Holistic Model of Education Abroad theory about the benefits of such travel, it is obvious that there is discordance between the reality of travel and the theory behind it. As a way to overcome some of these barriers in a safe environment and provide the benefits of a study abroad experience while ensuring accessibility, the theory of study away lends itself perfectly to begin to close this gap. First, however, it is important to understand the level of differing abilities experienced by the potential participants of this program to underscore the appropriateness of a study away versus study abroad program.

### **The Intellectual Disability Label**

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), Intellectual Disability is characterized by “significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills” (Patel, Greydanus, & Merrick, 2014, p. 4). In order to be diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability, the individual must have an IQ (intelligence quotient) of 70 or below (where the average is considered to be 90-100). Additionally, the IQ deficit must be accompanied by deficits in two or more of the following adaptive skill areas: communication, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills (reading, writing, mathematical thinking and computation), leisure, health, and safety. While a person may have a lower IQ, this does not always mean that they are automatically considered to have an Intellectual Disability. The coupling of a low IQ with deficits in adaptive functioning results in the ID diagnosis, given the implications on daily living. Intellectual Disabilities are then ranked in severity based on the IQ, adaptive functioning level, and intensity of supports needed. Whereas a mildly differently intellectually abled person has an IQ between 55-70 and may only need support intermittently, for the short term, and in only one area of daily living (school, home, or community), a severely differently intellectually abled person has an IQ between 25-40 and requires extensive support over their entire lifetime in multiple areas of daily living (Patel, Greydanus & Merrick, 2014).

### **Study Away: An Alternative to Study Abroad**

A different perspective to take on the traditional study abroad experience is study away. Defined by Fischer (2015) simply as “domestic off-campus programs,” study away focuses on providing students with learning experiences within their home country yet outside of their home

institution. Whether this be in a neighboring community to their own or in another area of the country altogether, study away gives students the opportunity to meet the same developmental and academic goals outlined by study abroad without going overseas. Sobania and Braskamp (2009) posit that “while study abroad is an important educational experience that can foster the development of these [previously detailed] desired learning outcomes and developmental skills, mindsets, and behaviors, so too are domestically based off-campus study programs” (p. 23). This is especially true within the United States, as the country is home to such a diverse population “that one does not need to travel more than a few blocks from a campus to have a cross-cultural experience, hear other languages spoken, meet people from different cultural traditions, and discover religious practices different from one’s own” (p. 23).

The concept of study away recognizes that the learning goals around diversity and internationalization, such as were described by the Holistic Model of Education Abroad, are equally able to be met domestically. Braskamp explains that “what matters isn't place but what happens in that place” (Fischer, 2015). If the institution identifies what skills and attitudes they want their students to develop overall, and then break those down into specific goals that can be achieved through a study away or study abroad program, the same competencies can be met domestically as well as overseas (Sobania & Braskamp, 2009). Braskamp states, “the crucial component is structuring programs in a way that students encounter and are challenged by varying perspectives,” and Mark Engberg, associate professor at Loyola University Chicago, asks, “To what extent do their experiences push students outside their comfort zone? That's where we see real change” (Fischer, 2015). Therefore, one does not need to travel overseas to reap the benefits of a study abroad program.

Further, proponents of study away posit that this alternative type of programming creates more accessibility for students who would not or could not study overseas. Those who are reluctant to travel far from home, those who cannot afford the cost of traditional study abroad programs, and those who have other reasons to stay nearby, such as student athletes or those with jobs, can get the experience of studying outside of their current location in a way that works better for them. Study away can also assist in developing closer relationships between diverse groups within a community, and provides the potential for other programs to be developed from it, such as internships, which give students the opportunity to integrate the skills they learned in the study away program into real-world work experiences (Sobania & Braskamp, 2009, p. 26).

Critics of study away state that while domestic study away programs have value, the “degrees of difference” (Fischer, 2015) are not enough when studying in one’s home culture. Brian J. Whalen, president of the Forum on Education Abroad stated, “in study away, there are more similarities than differences. In study abroad, there are more differences than similarities. They're just not the same" (Fischer, 2015). This opposing viewpoint, however, could actually prove beneficial to those with different abilities who need a bridge between learning only within their home culture and participating in an immersive international experience. Therefore, study away seems to be a perfect middle ground for providing differently intellectually abled participants with the opportunity to reap the benefits of an intercultural and experiential learning program without the necessity of traveling abroad.

### **Needs Assessment**

In order to inform the design of the program, a needs assessment was conducted with the stakeholders involved. Purposeful and convenience sampling strategies (Rossman & Rallis, 2016) were used to identify people who have a wealth of information on living and traveling



with persons with different abilities in order to assess what considerations would need to be made in planning an effective and appropriate program for young adults with different intellectual abilities. These considerations included geographic location, duration, and staffing of the program as well as desired learning outcomes for the participants.

### **Data Collection: Methods and Findings**

The primary method of data collection for this needs assessment was an online survey sent to parents of young adults aged 18-25 who have documented Intellectual Disabilities. The survey participants were recruited through personal networks of former students and my local community's network of parents of differently abled adults, including the Fairfield, Connecticut Special Education Parent Teacher Association. Survey participants were given the option to remain anonymous, use a pseudonym, or give permission for their real name to be used. The secondary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. See Appendix A for recruitment letter and informed consent, and Appendix B for survey/interview questions.

Surveys were collected from seven individuals. All of the respondents live in Fairfield, CT, and have children or siblings who are identified as having Intellectual Disabilities. The range of diagnoses included Down's Syndrome, low functioning Autism, and additional disability labels such as ADHD on top of their ID diagnosis. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with three family members of a young adult with ID. The survey questions were used to inform the interview guide, and through interviewees I was able to probe deeper into their opinions in response to these questions. Two out of the three interviews were conducted with people residing in Fairfield, CT, and one was conducted with an individual in Canada. Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted about thirty minutes on average.

Out of the seven survey respondents, three reported that their child had spent time away from their immediate family, while four had not. Of those who had gone away without a family member, two had stayed within their home state and one had traveled outside of the USA through a tour company. Additionally, of those respondents who had traveled with their differently abled family member, all reported the different ability as having an impact on their travel plans, most specifically reporting that their plans needed to revolve around what their family member could or could not access and/or enjoy. For example, one respondent noted that her child is intolerant to extreme heat, so their planned trip to the Bahamas had to be cancelled. Another respondent noted that, due to extreme anxiety around changing schedules, the family cannot fly places, since a disruption such as a flight delay would cause significant problems for the family member. This data substantiates the fact that travel is made more difficult, and sometimes impossible, due to having different abilities. The barriers to travel for individuals with different abilities that were previously discussed have been experienced first-hand by the research participants, making a study abroad program for young adults with ID extremely difficult to access. This data was important in considering an alternative to study abroad that would be accessible to the demographic of potential participants.

Importantly, four out of the seven survey respondents and two out of three interviewees answered that they would *not* be comfortable sending their family member away for over seven days. Of those who selected “yes” for feeling comfortable sending their family member away for seven days or fewer, six out of the seven survey respondents and two out of the three interviewees reported that staying within the United States would be the only option for their family member. Finally, all seven survey respondents and all three interviewees reported a number of supports they felt would be necessary for them to feel comfortable sending their

family member away, as well as specific curriculum preferences which will be discussed in detail below. The interview discussions focused heavily on the support needed for the potential participant, including staffing requirements, pre-departure training curriculum, and family-staff communication. Learning objectives were also a focus, with parents feeling strongly that independent living skills should be a priority of the curriculum. These survey responses and interviews had a very important impact on the program design, because although they demonstrated an interest in study away opportunities, it became evident that there are certain needs to be considered before families would feel comfortable participating.

The first major conclusion that could be drawn from this needs assessment is the location of the program. It is clear from the data collected that the program should take place in the United States. Further, if recruiting participants from a specific geographic location (in this case, Fairfield County, CT), the program should be set in a location that can be reached by car or train from the participant's home, avoiding the necessity of a plane ride. The second factor indicated by the data is that the program should last no longer than seven days. Thirdly, a number of supports need to be built into the program in order for participants' families to feel comfortable enrolling them. These supports include: pre-departure training and curriculum, pre-departure meetings between participants, family members, and on-site staff, a staff to participant ratio of no more than one to three, and regular check-ins throughout the program between participants and/or staff with the family at home. The final major programming consideration is the curriculum of the program. The data collected shows a participant desire for thoughtfully crafted curriculum that focuses on independent living skills. These include money management, problem solving skills (such as asking for directions, knowing who to contact in an emergency), following a schedule and managing time, and using public transportation. Therefore, while one purpose of

the program is to provide participants with a meaningful intercultural experience, another main purpose for those participating is to practice independent living. This strengthens the case for providing a study away experience rather than study abroad, as it is most useful for the participants to learn skills they will encounter in their daily lives in a novel environment in order to generalize the skill, yet not so novel that they are too overly-stimulated to do so. The data trends discussed above have been used to create the learning goals and objectives for the program, as well as the logistical side of it.

### **Limitations**

Due to a few contributing factors, this needs assessment had limitations that need to be addressed. First, the original needs assessment included a plan for data collection from AIFS as a stakeholder in the program. An electronic survey was sent to applicable members of the AIFS team, such as their director of Diversity and Inclusion, but no responses were gained. This is most likely due in large part to the COVID-19 health crisis that resulted in the drastic downsizing of AIFS staff and an increase in the remaining staff's responsibilities. Due to the ongoing health crisis and time constraint of this project, program planning needed to continue without AIFS's input from a provider's point of view. In the future, it would be beneficial to seek this information to inform aspects of the program, such as budget and other logistical considerations.

Another limitation is the lack of diversity in the collected data. Because personal networks were used to recruit survey and interview participants, they all came from the same geographic location and are limited by that region's demographic, which is largely affluent and White families who have access to a highly ranked public school system and community organizations dedicated to individuals with special needs. It is much more likely that these families have more access to travel and other such opportunities due to their financial status than other families in less wealthy areas may have.

Finally, although it would have been ideal to have the young adults for whom this program is planned provide insight as to what they would like in such a program, it was deemed that asking their input might prove to be more harmful than helpful. For example, the potential participant may not understand that this program is not yet functional and think that they would be attending in the near future, when this is not the case. Further, their cognitive ability to answer some of the questions involving decisions about the program may not allow them to identify potential hazards or necessities (such as they may say they would want to go overseas without fully understanding all of the impacts that has, like needing to fly). Many of the potential participants would also have required significant assistance in reading and answering the survey and/or interview questions, which would diminish the impact of the data since it would be influenced by the person reading/recording it for them. Therefore, the decision was made not to survey or interview any potential participants themselves, even though they are the ones directly impacted by the planning choices made based on the data received. If this program were to be run in reality, the evaluation at the end would provide a voice for the participants and future programming for the program would then be inclusive of their experiences and opinions. Despite these limitations, a fully functioning program can be planned based on the data collected and the theoretical framework used.

### **Program Overview**

The Study Away for the Differently Abled (SADA) program will mirror AIFS's current Summer Institute for the Gifted program (SIG). In the SIG program, participants live on campus, attending courses during the day and participating in structured activities in the evenings, simulating the college experience. Adapting this program to young adults with special needs will provide the participants with not only the experience of living independently on a college

campus, but also an element of intercultural learning by connecting international student volunteers to the program.

SADA will take place at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut and run in August 2021 for six nights and seven days. Yale University was selected for two main reasons: first, Yale is currently a partner-university with AIFS which runs a SIG program already. Second, there is a very high number of international students on the Yale campus who could be recruited to participate as volunteers. Finally, being located in New Haven, Yale is within a one hour or less drive for participants from Connecticut. The program will be open to young adults aged 18 through 25 who have documented Intellectual Disabilities falling within the lower end of “mildly impaired” to “severely impaired” categories. For those who have full-time caregivers at home, those caregivers would be able to attend with the participant. While participants from all over the United States would be able to join, recruitment will be based in Connecticut due to geographic proximity to the program location. This will be discussed further in the recruitment and marketing sections. The group will be capped at fifteen participants in order to safely and appropriately staff and plan meaningful curriculum.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

The main goals of this program are:

- 1) To provide young adults living in the United States (regardless of citizenship status) between the ages of 18-25 with different intellectual abilities with a study away opportunity that takes them outside of their home learning environment without their parents or guardians, fostering independence, personal growth, and confidence.
- 2) To practice daily living/independence skills.

- 3) To learn from same-aged peers of different cultures and ability levels through authentic conversations and activities, making sure that various cultures are represented in the study away experience.
- 4) To create awareness within the university community that different abilities do not mean an inability to learn, and promote equality between all individuals, regardless of differing abilities.

The participant learning objectives are:

- 1) Participants will develop communication skills by effectively and appropriately communicating with peers of differing cultures and abilities.
- 2) Participants will identify cultural similarities and differences between themselves and peers.
- 3) Participants will practice independent living skills, such as time management, money management, and problem solving.
- 4) International student volunteers will develop a more accepting and positive view of differently abled people.

### **Curriculum and Sequence**

The SADA program will include pre-departure training sessions, an on-campus intercultural curriculum, and an experiential independent living skills curriculum. A final reflection will be moderated on the last day of the program between the differently abled participants and the international peers. The different aspects of curriculum are detailed below, and a “Curriculum at a Glance” can be found in Appendix F.

**Pre-Departure**

Participants will begin preparing for their study away experience in late May for ten weeks ahead of their departure. The rationale behind this long pre-departure training period is that people with different intellectual abilities require extensive practice with newly learned skills before being able to perform them independently, and often need multiple exposures to new people before they feel comfortable with them. Therefore, the pre-departure training sessions will last an hour and a half and occur two times per week at AIFS's building in Stamford, CT. Parents and caregivers will be invited to the first three week's meetings to help the participant adapt to the new environment and people, while still having a trusted and known person with them. The first month's meetings will be focused on the participants and staff getting to know one another, building relationships and trust between the group members, staff members, and families. This will also be the time where parents and caregivers can connect with the Program Leader who will be assigned to their child to address any individual needs, such as medical needs or other special requests. Because the staff to participant ratio will be capped at one Program Leader to three participants in their direct care, staff will be able to attend to individualized needs and get to know their students on a deep level. This is especially important for participants who are nonverbal or have limited speech, as the Leader will need to learn how to communicate with them. These pre-departure meetings with family as well as participants will allow for the relevant discussions and learning of the participants' individual strengths and needs, while also building trust between families and AIFS staff who will be looking out for their children while on campus.

Beginning in the fourth week of pre-departure training, the family members' involvement will begin to fade out and participants will attend the sessions with just the group members and staff. During these meetings, curriculum will focus on independent living skills involved with



living on a college campus and being away from family. Topics to be covered include emergency protocols such as: when and how to call 911, when and how to call a staff member, what to do if a participant gets separated from the group and/or their Leader, how to ask someone for directions to a designated safe-place on campus, who to talk to and who not to talk to outside of known group members (i.e. “stranger danger”), and how to recognize and handle a medical issue (i.e. food allergies- recognizing the signs of having an allergic reaction and what to do about it). Another training focus will be on campus living, including dorm living and sharing spaces, personal hygiene routines, and managing money on a dining hall plan.

A final focus will be on accessing public transportation for off-campus events, such as reading a bus schedule, recognizing a bus stop, how to get on and pay for the bus, how to get off at the correct stop. These activities will be planned as structured lessons using a multidisciplinary approach including visual models, videos, simulations, and real-world practice. Due to the amount of curriculum being covered, this training will be the bulk of the pre-departure training and last for the remaining 6 weeks before departing for campus.

Finally, in the week leading up to the program, participants will take a tour of Yale’s campus to get familiar with the buildings they will be in, such as dorm, classroom, dining hall, and other student facilities they may be using while on campus.

For the international peers, AIFS will provide a pre-program training session on sensitivity to the differently abled and the perception of “disability” within the United States. This will include history on the Americans with Disabilities Act for context, different modern initiatives for the differently abled (such as the Special Olympics and inclusion education), and appropriate social interactions with the participants. Their training will include experiential learning activities as well, such as role playing an interaction or how to answer uncomfortable

questions (given that many ID persons struggle with social interaction and may be unaware of saying something culturally inappropriate).

### **Intercultural Learning Curriculum**

An important component of SADA is the opportunity to learn about other cultures, and the similarities and differences to the participants' own. It is an equally important goal of the program to open Yale students' eyes to differing ability not as a debilitating ailment but as a difference in culture and learning style that is as valuable as their own cultures and learning styles. International students who have been recruited as volunteers in the program will host presentations on their home cultures to the participants with the goals of both informing them about their culture as well as engaging them in conversations and activities that furthers the understanding of the novel culture. For example, one day an Indian student might present about their life in India- what their school was like, what their house and neighborhood looks like, what they do for fun, traditions around holidays not celebrated widely in the United States, games or sports unique to India. They may include a food tasting of traditional dishes, bring in or wear traditional clothing, engage the participants in playing a traditional game, or any number of other experiential cultural activities. The cultural presentations will all end with a facilitated group discussion about the differences and similarities the participants noticed between the novel culture and their own. These presentations will constitute for the morning portion of the day and will include built-in breaks and other necessary considerations for the participants' stamina and engagement. After the cultural presentation in the morning, participants and volunteers will go to the dining hall for lunch, where they will practice money management skills in ordering and paying for food, as well as continuing social and intercultural communication skills as they eat with their peers.

### **Independent Living Skills Curriculum**

During the afternoon portion of the day participants will have structured free time, where they are able to take advantage of campus facilities and/or community experiences. These activities will draw on the independent skills training from the pre-departure sessions. For example, participants may be given the option to go to the student union on campus, go to the gym, or go off campus. The staff members will facilitate these choices and activities, though they are largely to give the participants the feeling of independence and control, which often times they do not have in their day-to-day lives at home. When going off campus, participants will be using learned skills such as riding the bus, paying for goods at a store, or whatever else the activity calls for. Leaders will assist their participants with these skills as needed to ensure safety and appropriate skill usage. During the evenings after eating in the dining hall, participants will have down-time in their rooms before bed. They may read books or magazines, use technology (if provided and approved by the family), listen to music, or chat with each other in the common space within the dorm. Participants will be able to contact their family members after the second night of the program, allowing them time to settle into their new surroundings and immerse into the university lifestyle; sometimes family involvement can exacerbate feelings of homesickness, so a short period of total immersion helps to create a new schedule and routine, which also helps to regulate anxiety. After this period, participants can use evening free time to contact family members if they wish. Staff will also institute a bedtime so that participants maintain a healthy sleep schedule.

AIFS staff may also adapt current SIG program activities to SADA, such as putting on a talent show, facilitated sports games, board game night, and other such activities. Just like SIG programs, SADA will culminate in a closing ceremony on the final day, which families are invited to attend. Participants will work with the international student volunteers to create an

International Fair, where each participant pairs with an international student (or two participants with one volunteer, as necessary) to set up a cultural booth, showing what they have learned. Their booths can include elements from the international volunteers' presentations, as well as give the participant an opportunity to share what they learned about that culture in any variety of ways. Participants and volunteers will be encouraged to use their afternoon time the previous day to get any supplies they may need, such as ingredients for a traditional dish or small decorations. Because it is such a short amount of time, the International Fair booths are not expected to be elaborate, but highlight one or two things the participant learned about that culture. At the end of the fair, the Program Director will provide a closing speech and award participants with their certificate of completion. Families will then have a buffet lunch provided by SADA before they take their participant home with them.

### **After the Program**

In order to stay connected with their program peers after leaving campus, a pen-pal system will be set up between the participants and international volunteers. This would be facilitated by AIFS and can take any form including written letters, video chats, prerecorded video messages, phone calls, and in-person visits if applicable. While participants will not be required to partake in this ongoing aspect of the program, it is highly encouraged, and will assist with re-entry to regular life while maintaining a connection with the experiences had on campus. Parents will be asked to do a follow-up survey to help assess the effectiveness of the program in daily living independence and cultural learning (detailed in the evaluation section).

### **Staffing Plan**

Staffing for SADA will be provided by AIFS and may draw from their current pool of employees (especially those involved in SIG programming) or may require hiring new

employees. There will be one Program Director who will oversee the program from marketing and recruiting to curriculum development and day-to-day operations on campus, though they may use the team of Program Leaders to assist them. This person would likely need to devote their full workday to these responsibilities beginning in December of 2020 in order to have the program fully functional by May 2021 with the start of pre-departure training sessions. The Director would also be in charge of communication with the families during the program and recruiting and training the international student volunteers. Due to the amount of planning and needs to be considered for participants to be successful, it would be recommended that the Director be hired from within the AIFS SIG programming team and have experience with these aspects of program planning.

There will also be five Program Leaders who will each be in charge of three participants. These staff members would require training in basic different ability support and would ideally have background experience working with people with different abilities. The Leaders could be special education teachers or paraprofessionals recruited from the surrounding school districts who are looking for summer work that is different than the traditional options offered to them. These staff members would begin working with the participants in May during the pre-departure training sessions. The AIFS Diversity and Inclusion Officer will also be involved in overseeing the program, especially from a legal and safety standpoint, assisting the Director when necessary.

### **Program Marketing**

The Program Director will use developed marketing materials such as paper and digital brochures sent via mail and email, as well as social media marketing via Facebook, LinkedIn and other applicable platforms. They may also request to be promoted on different agencies' websites or in newsletters, as well as make in-person visits to schools or organizations. Additionally,

AIFS will create a webpage to be included on their website, just as SIG and their other programs have. This webpage will feature the aspects of the program including the learning goals and outcomes, curriculum overview, and information on safety and individualized planning options to meet the needs of all interested participants. The webpage will have a link to a short application, which will be designed to ensure that participants meet the requirements of the program as well as provide relevant details about their needs and application for financial aid.

### **Participant Recruitment and Admissions**

Recruitment of participants will begin in December 2020 in order to reach the fifteen-person enrollment goal before the May pre-departure training sessions begin. Participants will be recruited by the Program Director by reaching out to community organizations dedicated to individuals with different abilities as well as school districts within Connecticut, beginning in Fairfield County. Recruitment will be focused in Connecticut due to the location of the pre-departure training and on-campus location, as well as the existence of a large community base of differently abled-focused individuals and organizations. For example, public school districts have designated Special Education Parent Teacher Associations for parents of students with different abilities as well as agencies such as the Special Olympics of CT which provide programming for adults with different abilities. By using these preestablished community partners, AIFS can access fairly large networks of potential participants easily. If enough participants do not enroll based on recruitment within Connecticut, AIFS staff may recruit from surrounding areas such as New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. If this is the case, then the pre-departure training sessions would need to have a virtual component so that out-of-state participants can still attend.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through April 2021, and participants will be accepted to the program on a first-come, first-serve basis if they meet the requirements for participation and provide a security deposit. Upon acceptance to the program, SADA staff (Program Director and/or Leaders) will hold interviews with the participant and their families in order to account for individual needs while on campus so that the appropriate planning measures can be taken.

### **Logistics**

Families of participants will be responsible for bringing the participant to and from the pre-departure training sessions at AIFS's office in Stamford, CT twice a week beginning in May 2021, or to ensure the participant is accessing the virtual pre-departure sessions if unable to attend in-person. Families will also be responsible for bringing the participant to Yale's campus on the first day of the program as well as attending the International Fair and closing ceremony on the final day, and then bringing their participant home.

Upon arrival to Yale's campus on the first day of the program, participants and families will be met by the program staff at their assigned dorm, where their Program Leader will assist the participants in finding their room, depositing luggage, and facilitating saying goodbye to the families. Beginning with dinner on this first night, all meals are provided through the dining hall plan included in the program tuition. Dorms will be assigned based largely on individual needs, such as a wheelchair accessible room and bathroom, a single room versus double room requiring a roommate, etc. which will be planned for with the families beforehand. All participants will be housed in the same dorm building, though genders will be separated (i.e. males and females on different floors or in different wings/halls). Program Leaders will have single rooms interspersed between participant rooms for easy access if needed during the night.

Payment for the program will follow AIFS's protocol for the SIG program, accounting for the cost of on campus living and intercultural coursework. Families may apply for financial assistance with their application to the program, and it will be given based on AIFS's current guidelines for aid. The application for financial aid will play no part in the acceptance decision of any participant to the program.

### **Health and Safety Plan**

The Study Away for the Differently Abled program will follow AIFS's current safety and risk management plan for SIG (AIFS, n.d.) with adaptations to account for the extraordinary needs of participants with special needs. A major aspect of safety is the appointment of responsible and well-trained staff members, as detailed above. This training may include training on specific aspects of different diagnoses and how to handle them, such as an Epileptic participant having a seizure. Because each participant will have different safety needs, the staff to participant ratio is kept very low and each staff member will spend time planning with the family for any anticipated needs. The staff member will have a detailed safety plan for each of their designated students. Any necessary medication should be provided by the family upon bringing the participant to campus on the first day of the program and left with the campus Health Center. Program Leaders will be in charge of ensuring that any of their participants who take medication are brought to the Health Center each morning to be administered their medications by a licensed healthcare professional. In the event of a medical emergency, participants will be brought to Yale New Haven Hospital. Families of participants must provide proof of medical insurance coverage prior to the start of the on-campus portion.

Further, close communication between staff members and families will be prioritized throughout the program. The Program Director and all Leaders will be required to keep a cell



phone on them at all times in case of emergency. Program Leaders will be in communication with the Director when the groups are in different places, such as during the afternoon, so that the Director knows where each group is on or off campus. Program Leaders will also communicate to the Director if a family needs to be contacted for an emergency. Outside of emergency calls, the Director will update families at the end of each day via a feed on the program website, so that family members can see what the participants did each day. Participants will be receiving training on how to contact staff members if they find themselves separated from their group for any reason, although it remains largely the Program Leaders' responsibility to ensure their group members are accounted for at all times.

While safety will be highly prioritized during the pre-departure trainings to avoid issues while on campus, families will be asked to sign a liability waiver so that AIFS is not held responsible for any incidents outside of staff's control during the program. Families will also be asked to sign a behavioral contract outlining the participants' expected behaviors while on campus. While some behaviors may occur as a manifestation of the differing ability, it is still expected that participants are able to exhibit safe behaviors and have self-control so that all participants and staff have a safe experience. Participants who cannot self-regulate behaviors that become physically aggressive will need to be picked up by a parent, which will be clearly stated in the behavioral contract.

### **Crisis Management Plan**

SADA will follow a joint crisis management plan of AIFS's crisis management protocols (AIFS, n.d.) and Yale University's "Emergency Response Guidebook" (Yale University, 2020). Both are accessible on their respective websites and provided in the References section. Included in AIFS's protocols are a twenty-four-hour emergency service which would be contacted by the

Program Director to report an incident in order to initiate response protocols. Response decisions are made by AIFS's crisis management team based in Stamford which includes the Executive Director, Risk Manager, and Director of Programs. Yale University's "Emergency Response Guidebook" details the plans for varying emergencies including different physical threats, weather emergencies, and medical emergencies. They have a section specifically dedicated to preparedness and response for people with different abilities. All program staff will be trained in AIFS's and Yale's crisis management protocols so that they are equipped to deal with any situation that may present itself.

### **Budget and Budget Notes**

The cost of the program per participant will be \$4,610. A detailed budget and notes can be found in Appendix C. The program costs reflect AIFS's SIG program fees while accommodating for the necessary number of staff, housing and food, and incidental costs that inevitably arise (for example the cost of groceries to cook a native dish for the International Fair). Participants are encouraged to apply for financial aid while filling out the application for the program. No student will be accepted or denied from the program based on their level of financial need. While AIFS cannot guarantee financial aid, the organization will work to raise funds to support socio-economically disadvantaged participants. Families are also encouraged to seek and apply for scholarships independently.

### **Evaluation Plan**

After the end of the program, evaluation will be carried out to determine the effectiveness and overall success of the SADA program, focusing on the achievement of the program learning goals and objectives and overall satisfaction of the participants, including international volunteers, and their families. Throughout the program, the Director and Leaders will be

conducting informal formative evaluations by observing the participants and volunteers and using their judgement to decide if any immediate changes need to be made. This could include ending a cultural session early if participants are disengaged, moving the location of a session due to accessibility issues, or providing more structure during “free” time. It is expected that hired staff have enough experience and training to make these adjustments as needed, and not wait until the formal summative evaluation results show an area that could have been improved upon earlier. Formal, summative evaluation will include pre- and post-program surveys to be completed by the participants’ families as well as the international student volunteers, a facilitated roundtable discussion at the end of the program with participants and volunteers, and a discussion held with SADA staff including the Director and all Leaders, the AIFS Program Development officer, and Diversity and Inclusion officer.

### **Pre- and Post-Program Surveys**

At one of the first pre-departure training sessions which involve parents of the participants, each family will take a survey pertaining to the current level of the participants’ skill with the program learning objectives. This will focus on their current understanding of “culture,” and their ability to name any other cultures, similarities and/or differences between their home culture and another. It will also focus on current levels of independent living that will be addressed within the program, such as money management, use of public transportation, personal hygiene routines, and social skills. A few days after the program is over, parents will be sent the same survey again to respond to the same questions to be able to analyze the impact of the program on the participants.

International student volunteers will also take a survey before the participants arrive on campus. It will focus on their home culture’s view of “disability”, how they perceive

“disability”, and their personal experiences with people who have different abilities. Again, a few days after the end of the program, they will be given the same survey (minus the question about their home culture, as this program is not aimed toward changing cultural perceptions) to see how their views on and attitudes about differing abilities have changed, if at all, as a result of spending a week learning with a group of differently abled peers. Both parent and volunteer surveys will have multiple choice as well as open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys.

### **Facilitated Participant Discussion**

Although some participants may not be fully verbal or fully cognizant of cultural differences in order to hold a longwinded discussion about what they have learned from their international peers, participants will all have varying abilities to comprehend and communicate. Therefore, while a traditional focus-group discussion may not be what this roundtable looks like, it is still important to hear from the participants, in whatever way they can communicate it, what they learned. The Director facilitating may ask specific questions to the participants, such as yes/no questions or others that are easy to understand and answer such as, “What was your favorite country you learned about?” or, “What was your favorite food you tried?” Some participants will be able to vocalize more than others, but all will benefit from the discussion as a whole. Student volunteers and Program Leaders will be involved in the conversation as well. Because participants may not be able to verbalize a lot about cultural awareness, the evaluation will rely more heavily on the surveys and staff discussion, but will include all relevant data that this roundtable will provide.

**SADA Staff Review Discussion**

Finally, the Program Leaders and Director will meet with AIFS programming and D&I staff to debrief about the program. They will discuss what aspects of the planned program worked and which did not, and they may share unplanned things that were positive that should be included in future planning. They will analyze all aspects of the on-campus program as well as prior planning in order to adjust for the next year. For example, they may discuss the budget to reflect whether the participants had enough money for meals and leisure activities; marketing and recruitment strategies to ensure diversity between participants as well as international student volunteers; the schedule, curriculum, and International Fair. This discussion may need to occur over a few days so that each staff member and each topic is given the amount of time needed to fully process the program and the implications for running it again.

**Final Report**

Once all of the surveys have been returned and the staff have finished their meetings, the Program Director will compile all of the data into a comprehensive report to share with AIFS. This report will detail how effective the program was at providing novel cultural experiences and information to the participants, as demonstrated by their self-reports from the roundtable as well as the parent surveys, comparing pre- and post-program data. The report will also detail how effective the program was at influencing Yale international students' views on differing ability by comparing their pre- and post-program survey data and roundtable discussion. Information about participants' independent living skills will be analyzed by comparing parents' pre- and post-program survey data. Finally, the report will provide recommendations for future planning and potential scale-up of the program.

### **Conclusions**

Students from the United States have been taking advantage of study abroad and study away opportunities for decades, which are proven to be highly beneficial not only for academic learning but personal growth as well. Students traditionally access credit-bearing courses while studying abroad during their undergraduate studies between the ages of 18-25 while enrolled in university, with thousands of programs available to them either through their university or a third-party provider. While all of these students reap the benefits of attending college and studying abroad, another demographic of 18-25 year-olds are not afforded this opportunity- those who are labeled as Intellectually Disabled and are unable to attend a traditional college. This demographic of young adults, though differently abled than their peers, is still able to access study away programming if it is designed with their specific needs in mind. As discussed, there are many aspects of travel that serve as barriers to those with special needs, but this does not mean that they should not get the opportunity at all. Through the lens of the social approach to disability, we are reminded that although society has placed these barriers on differently abled persons, it is our responsibility to remove as many of these barriers as possible to allow all to access this type of learning opportunity.

The Study Away for the Differently Abled program will provide much-needed programming for young adults with different intellectual abilities in a number of areas of need. First, it provides college-aged young adults who cannot attend traditional college or university programs due to their different abilities the opportunity to live on a college campus for a week, experiencing college life while practicing independent living skills. Second, it provides those young adults who have, for the most part, never traveled internationally the experience of talking to and befriending a peer from another country and to learn about the different cultures around the world. Apart from the ID participants, Yale international students will also benefit from the

SADA program. These volunteers will reap the benefits of getting to know and become friends with a person with different abilities, which will ideally change their perspectives on differing abilities on the whole to be more accepting of those with differences.

Overall, the Study Away for the Differently Abled program at Yale University, run by the American Institute for Foreign Study, will help challenge long held ideas about “disability” from a medical point of view, which emphasizes the disability as an individual’s “tragedy” to deal with in life. By giving access to the traditional college experience to a group of individuals labeled as “severely disabled,” this program will demonstrate that “disability” is simply a social construct, and highlight that each individual has different abilities they are able to capitalize on in order to be successful. Participants in the program who are ID are able to learn and practice independent living skills and interact with and learn about different cultures, proving that all people are able to benefit from educational travel experiences, be they study abroad or study away. Further, the international peers who engage with ID participants are likely to challenge their cultural perspectives on different abilities by interacting with a demographic of peers they may not be used to learning from. Both groups of participants will deepen their academic and practical living knowledge, as well as develop intrapersonal skills, empathy, and perspective on how the differences between us are to be learned from and celebrated.

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## Appendix A: Research Recruitment Letter and Informed Consent

## Participation and Informed Consent

Subject: Study Away Program for Young Adults with Cognitive Disabilities

Hello,

My name is Emily Coombs Huydic. I am a graduate student completing my Master's Degree in International Education through the School for International Training Graduate Institute. As part of this program, I am designing a study abroad program for young adults aged 18-25 who have cognitive disabilities. In my work as a public-school special education teacher I work with students with a wide variety of disabilities and have seen firsthand that experiential learning (learning through life experiences) is vital to the learning process. One life experience that taught me more than anything else was my college study abroad program. I draw on the skills I formed abroad daily, and recognize that studying abroad is invaluable for students of any age or ability level. While thousands of study abroad options exist, one group of people seems to be underserved by any of them. This group is people with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities, who deserve the same opportunity to learn and travel, yet there are almost no programs designed with their needs in mind.

In order to change this and provide an opportunity for cognitively disabled young adults to study abroad, I am conducting research in order to inform my program design. I am reaching out to adult family members of potential program participants to see what they would look for in a study abroad program. For example, I am interested in their opinions on locations they would be comfortable sending their family member, including distance from home, mode of travel, and duration of the program. I am also seeking information about the learning objectives that families would be most interested in in order to plan a meaningful curriculum for the program. Finally, I am reaching out to stakeholders at the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) based in Stamford, CT, to gather information about their interest in running a program for young adults with disabilities as well as the resources needed to do so.

In order to gather this data, I am asking for families of potential program participants to take an online survey. The survey will consist of 6-7 multiple choice/short answer questions and should take no longer than 15-20 minutes of your time. I would also like to conduct a phone interview with 3 families in order to go deeper into the survey questions. This should take between 30-45 minutes. It is possible that some questions may create some discomfort, as we will be discussing barriers faced by individuals with disabilities, but I have attempted to minimize these discomforts as much as possible, and you are welcome to skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. There is no penalty for not participating in this study, and no penalties should you choose to skip any questions. Further, you have the right to discontinue participation at any time, even after you have submitted your answers and they will be deleted. Within the survey and/or interview, you may choose to have your identity kept anonymous or to be identified by a pseudonym. After data is collected, it will be stored in a password-protected file in order to maintain confidentiality. When the data is being presented in this capstone project, no identifiable information will be used.

With that, I would like to invite you to be part of my research in whichever way you prefer. I am very much looking forward to gathering this important data in order to plan an engaging, educational, and life-changing opportunity for a very deserving group of individuals.

If you have any questions, I am reachable by email at [Emily.Coombs@mail.sit.edu](mailto:Emily.Coombs@mail.sit.edu) or by phone at (203) 581-3060. You may also feel free to reach out to my academic advisor, Dr. Alla Korzh at [Alla.Korzh@sit.edu](mailto:Alla.Korzh@sit.edu) or (802) 258.3395.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason!

Thank you for your time and support,  
Emily Coombs Huydic  
Master's Candidate  
SIT Graduate Institute

## Appendix B: Survey Questions and Interview Guide

1. Does your family member identify as having an intellectual disability?

a. Yes.

i. If yes, and you feel comfortable sharing, what disability do they have?

b. No.

2. Has your child/family member with a disability ever traveled without an adult member of their family before?

a. Yes.

i. Briefly detail where they went, with whom, and what their trip consisted of.

b. No.

i. Briefly detail why

3. Has your family member or any other members of your family found that having a disability created barriers to travel?

a. Yes.

i. Briefly detail what they were

ii. Please choose the number which represents the amount of impact it had on

your travel:

1) Not at all impactful

2) Slightly impactful, we had to work around/change 1-2 things for our trip but were able to go mostly as planned

3) Mildly impactful, we planned the trip around the needs of the family member which influenced our travel decisions, but we were still able to go

4) Impactful, we had to change many of our original travel plans to accommodate the specific needs of our family member

5) We were not able to travel at all

4. Would you be comfortable with sending your family member away for an extended period of time without yourself or another member of your family present?

- a. Yes.
- b. No

5. If yes, please answer the following questions:

a. What type of location would you be most interested in? Check all that apply. (i.e. English speaking, less than a 5 hour plane ride, no plane ride required, etc.)?

- English speaking country outside of the United States
- Non-English speaking country
- Stay within North America (United States and Canada)
- Plane ride of any length
- Plane ride up to 5 hours (from New York)
- Plane ride up to 3 hours (from New York)
- No plane ride (would require staying within the United States or Canada)
  - Train ride of any length    Train ride up to 5 hours    Train ride up to 3 hours
  - Van ride of any length    Van ride up to 5 hours    Van ride up to 3 hours
- Other requirement(s): \_\_\_\_\_

b. How long would you be comfortable with your family member being abroad for?

c. What types of support would need to be provided for you to feel comfortable with your family member being away without you?

d. What skills are the most important for your family member to learn while they were away? Please be specific, if possible (i.e. instead of “independent living skills,” use “money management, ordering food at a restaurant, reading a bus/train schedule”).

6. What other questions, concerns, or comments do you have regarding the planning of this type of program?

## Appendix C: Budget and Budget Notes

	Cost per Unit	Multiplier (M) 1	M1 Descriptor	% of paid staff time for program		Total
<b>Direct Expenses</b>						
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>						
<b>Salary</b>						
1. Program Director, FTE	50,000	1	Employee	0.65		32,500
2. Program Leaders; Pre-Departure	450	5	Employee	1		2,250
3. Program Leaders; On Campus	2,000	5	Employee	1		10,000
<b>Subtotal: Personnel Expenses</b>						<b>44,750</b>

	Cost per Unit	Multiplier (M) 1	M1 Descriptor	M2	M2 Descriptor	Total
<b>Non-Peronnel Expenses</b>						
<b>Pre-Departure Expenses</b>						
4. Pre-Departure Training Sessions	100	20	Course			2,000
5. Training Materials and Supplies	250	1	Fixed			250
6. Marketing and Recruitment	500	1	Fixed			500
7. Application Fee	25	15	Fixed			375
<b>On-Campus Expenses</b>						
8. Program Fee	212	15	Course			3,180
9. Housing Cost: Participants	50	6	Nights	15	Participants	4,500
10. Housing Cost: Staff	50	6	Nights	6	Employees	1,800
11. Daily Meal Plan: Participants	60	6	Days	15	Participants	5,410
12. Daily Meal Plan: Staff	60	6	Days	6	Employees	2,170
13. Activity Money	20	15	Participants			300
14. Closing Ceremony Lunch	300	1	Fixed			300
<b>Subtotal: Non-personnel Direct Expenses</b>						<b>20,485</b>
<b>Total Direct Expenses</b>						<b>65,235</b>
<b>Indirect Expense calculated at 6%</b>						<b>3,914</b>
<b>Total Program Budget</b>						<b>69,149</b>
<b>Price per Participant (15)</b>						<b>4,610</b>

**Budget Notes****Personnel Expenses**

Item 1: Program Director will be hired from within AIFS and will retain some responsibilities outside of the SADA program, but will devote their full work day to SADA planning

from December through the end of the program in August, as well as a few weeks after for evaluation of the program. This constitutes about 65% of their full time employment.

Items 2-3: Program Leaders will be hired on an hourly basis for pre-departure training at 15\$ per hour per training session (15\$ per hour x 1.5 hours x 10 weeks x 2 sessions per week). Once the program starts, because they are on call 24/7 for a week, they will receive a fixed payment of \$2000.

### **Non-personnel Expenses**

Item 4: Pre-departure training sessions require the use of AIFS building space, this allocation is intended to pay for utilities cost (lighting, heat/air conditioning, etc.) as well as custodial or security needs that will be incurred from this additional building use.

Item 5: Classroom materials such as paper, flip charts, video projection equipment, other visual aids appropriate based on disability needs (i.e. a vision-impaired person may need materials blown up to be larger, requiring more printer ink). These materials can also be used on-campus.

Item 6: The marketing and recruitment budget for creating marketing materials, postage for mailed material, fees for advertising on websites, and other recruitment needs.

Item 7: AIFS requires an application fee for all of its programs.

Item 8: AIFS requires program fees for all of its programs. This program fee was calculated as half the cost of the SIG program fee, due to the fact that the SADA participants do not have certified educators teaching them a set curriculum such as the SIG participants do.

Items 9 and 10: The cost of \$50 per night to live in the dorms covers daily bathroom and common area cleaning, full cleaning of the individual rooms before and after the program, and utilities.

Items 11 and 12: The meal plan will put \$60 per day on each participant and staff member's University keycard. This pays for either 3 meals of \$20 each, or smaller meals with snack money, plus \$10 for breakfast on the morning of the 7th day (see note for Item 14).

Item 13: Each participant will get an extra \$20 on their University keycard to use for free time activities, including 1 round trip bus ride off campus and money to be used for International Fair booths (i.e. groceries for food tasting, decorations).

Item 14: After the International Fair and Closing Ceremony on the final day, family members are invited to stay for lunch catered by the University dining company. With a budget of \$300, a simple buffet of sandwiches, salad, fruit, and dessert can be offered to each participant and two family members and staff.

## Appendix D: Parent Pre-Departure and Post-Return Survey

In order to determine if the SADA program is successful in its goals to provide participants with a cultural experience as well as develop independent living skills, please fill out this survey based on your family member's *current level* of functioning/knowledge in the following areas. You will mark these same categories again one week after your family member returns home from SADA to see if they have changed their levels of functioning/understanding after participating in the program.

Rate each competency on a scale from 0-5, with 0 being no understanding/knowledge and 5 being the ability to communicate these understandings clearly and independently.

## Understanding of Culture

1. My family member understands the concept of culture as values or attitudes, traditions, and customs by a group of people. For example, they understand religion and religious holiday traditions (such as Christmas versus Hanukkah), national holiday traditions (such as the Fourth of July in the United States), different styles of dress, or different types of foods associated with countries (i.e. "Mexican" food versus "American" food)

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. My family member can name or identify other cultures

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. My family member can identify their own culture, or one of their own cultures (i.e. "American", "Catholic", "Jewish", "Irish", "African American", "Latino/a")

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. My family member can identify differences between their own culture and a different culture

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5



5. My family member can identify similarities between their own culture and a different culture

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Rate each activity on a scale from 0-5, with 0 being no current use of the skill and 5 being the consistent, independent use of the skill. Mark N/A if the skill does not pertain due to physical ability.

#### Independent Living Skills

1. My family member is tolerant of following directions given by a non-family member or familiar adult

N/A                      0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. My family member, to the extent that their physical abilities allow, independently maintains a personal hygiene routine (i.e. brushes teeth, showers, applies deodorant, brushes hair, cleans face/hands while eating) with 1 or fewer prompts by a caregiver.

N/A                      0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. My family member can follow a verbal/visual/written schedule given 1 or fewer reminders by a caregiver of the upcoming activity.

N/A                      0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. My family member can calmly and effectively communicate their personal needs to an adult/caregiver (i.e. "I need a break", "I need to use the bathroom", "I don't feel well", etc.)

N/A                      0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. My family member can have a conversation, in any form appropriate for them, with peers and/or adults.

N/A            0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

6. My family member can manage money given a set budget and 1 or fewer prompts by an adult (i.e. “You have \$10.00 for lunch today”, and spends no more than \$10.00).

N/A            0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

7. My family member can, with some or no support, read a public transportation schedule and use it to get on the correct transport at a given time (i.e. can read the bus schedule with support, and then get on that bus at the correct time).

N/A            0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

8. My family member can, with 1 or fewer prompts, exit public transportation at the appropriate stop.

N/A            0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

## Appendix E: International Students Evaluation

## Pre-Program Survey

In order to determine if your participation in the SADA program results in the shifting of your perspectives, please honestly answer each of the following questions regarding your views on disability. No judgement will be passed on your answers, and you may remain anonymous if you desire. Where appropriate, use a rating scale (0 being not at all, through 5, all the time) or answer open-ended questions.

1. My home culture/country **in theory/by law** treats individuals with disabilities as equal to those without disabilities (i.e. provides the same educational opportunities, has laws ensuring the protection of those with disabilities, has laws about physical access needs (i.e. wheelchair ramps to areas with stairs, accessible parking spaces).

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

2. My home culture/country **in practice** treats individuals with disabilities as equal to those without (see above for examples).

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

3. My home culture/country recognizes “invisible disabilities” such as learning disabilities or ADHD as true disabilities (as demonstrated by providing educational services, post-educational services, carries out diagnostic testing).

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

- 4. My home culture/country has a positive view of people with disabilities (as demonstrated by inclusive language and education practices, has and carries out laws for their protection/advancement, has agencies that advance inclusionary practices).

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Comments:

- 5. I believe that all people can learn, regardless of differing abilities/needs.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Please expand on your above answer- what in your personal experiences has led you to this belief?

- 6. I believe that I can learn from those with different abilities

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

- 7. I have interacted/spent time with individuals with disabilities in my home culture/country.

0                    1                    2                    3                    4                    5

Please expand on your above answer- if you have not spent time with someone with differing abilities, why not? If you have, in what capacity and how frequently?

8. What led you to participate in this program? What do you hope to get out of your participation?

### Post-Program Survey

1. My perception of people with disabilities has changed after participating in the SADA program.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Please explain your answer above. What aspects of your perception(s) changed? What part of the program caused them to change? If they did not change, why not?

2. My perception of disability is different than my home culture/country's after participating in the SADA program.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Please explain your answer above. What aspects of your perception(s) now differ from your home culture/country? What part of the program caused them to change? If they do not differ, why not?

3. As a result of the SADA program, I plan to seek out more opportunities to interact with and/or advocate for people with disabilities.

0                      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Comments:

4. Referring to the question in the pre-program survey, “what do you hope to get out of your participation in the SADA program”, reflect on your answer and your experience. Did the program accomplish what you hoped it would? In what ways yes or no? What aspect(s) of the program were the most effective in accomplishing those goals? What aspects were the least effective?
  
5. Should this program be run again in the future, what aspects should be kept the same? What aspects should be changed? Why, and what change should take place?
  
6. Please detail any other comments you feel relevant to the evaluation of the SADA program.

## Appendix F: Curriculum at a Glance

Day of Program	Activity
Predeparture Week 1 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director introductory presentation</li> <li>• Introductions of participants, family members, staff members</li> <li>• Program Director facilitates “getting to know you” icebreaker activities</li> <li>• Families and participants meet Program Leader assigned to them</li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 2 (2 Days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director and Leaders share facilitation of more icebreaker games, repeating of names to aid in memory</li> <li>• Program Leaders meet with family members to discuss individual needs, concerns, goals, etc. for their assigned participants</li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 3 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Leaders and assigned participants break into small groups to further get to know one another and build relationships</li> <li>• Family members will take a less-involved role in activities to begin fading out</li> <li>• Final icebreaker activities</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="201 1283 574 1318">Predeparture Week 4 (1 day)</p> <p data-bbox="201 1356 786 1497">*All following training curriculum will include multiple methods of delivery, such as oral presentation with visuals, video, role play, practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members no longer attend training sessions</li> <li>• Emergency Response Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying different types of emergencies on campus (i.e. fire, physical threat, someone is hurt)</li> <li>• How to respond to these emergencies- how to call 911, when to and when not to call</li> <li>• Identifying personal medical needs to avoid an emergency (i.e. know if I have an allergy, what foods I should avoid, what to do if I ingest that food)</li> <li>• How to call a Program Leader in an emergency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Predeparture Week 4 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review emergency protocols</li> <li>• Safety Expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stranger Danger”</li> <li>• Staying with your Leader</li> <li>• What to do if you get lost on campus (who and how to ask for directions)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 5 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review emergency protocols, safety expectations</li> <li>• Living on Campus Training: Living in a Dorm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing spaces with others</li> <li>• Keeping your individual room clean</li> <li>• Where will my Leader be in relation to my room?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 5 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review safety expectations, living in a dorm</li> <li>• Living on Campus Training: Personal Hygiene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing clothes based on the weather</li> <li>• Brushing hair and teeth, washing face, how often to shower, applying deodorant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 6 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Living on Campus: dorm and hygiene</li> <li>• Living on Campus Training: Managing Money in the Dining Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is my budget for each meal?</li> <li>• Practice “buying” food items for each meal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 6 (1 day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Living on Campus Training-simulation activity: participants will practice a day by simulating setting an alarm to “wake up” and then completing set activities that review all skills covered so far.</li> </ul>



Predeparture Week 7 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Public Transportation Training: Buses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading a bus schedule</li> <li>• Finding the correct bus stop</li> <li>• Getting on and paying</li> <li>• Finding the correct stop to get off</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 8 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Taking the Bus</li> <li>• Getting Around Campus Training: Reading a map <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a “scavenger hunt” activity to practice using a map</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Highlight key buildings on campus, where they are on the map</li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 9 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all presented curriculum with interactive simulations, practice scenarios</li> </ul>
Predeparture Week 10 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members bring participants to Yale University campus where they go on a walking tour of campus, learn where their dorm room will be, visit key campus buildings, and practice getting from place to place. They will also view where emergency safe places are and “blue light” phones for emergency calls.</li> <li>• International Yale students receive 1-day training presentation and interactive activities</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: Introductions and icebreaker activities with participants and international students</li> <li>• Afternoon session: Take a fitness class or play a game of basketball in the campus gym</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: International student cultural presentations (2)</li> <li>• Afternoon session: Hang out in student union, get a coffee/drink, play games</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: International student cultural presentations (2)</li> <li>• Afternoon session: Play lawn games (frisbee, volleyball, cornhole) in the quad</li> </ul>

On Campus Curriculum Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: International student cultural presentations (2)</li> <li>• Afternoon session: Visit the library, pick out some leisure books/magazines, take bus to Sleeping Giant State Park for a hike</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: International student cultural presentations (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pair up participants with international students to begin preparing for Intercultural Fair</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Afternoon session: Take the bus into New Haven- visit the park, shopping areas, arcade</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning session: Facilitated Final Reflection discussion</li> <li>• Afternoon session: Start preparing materials for Fair- take bus or walk into town to buy needed supplies</li> </ul>
On Campus Curriculum Day 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning Session: Prepare Intercultural Fair booth</li> <li>• Afternoon Session: Intercultural fair, closing presentation by Program Director, final Lunch, goodbyes</li> </ul>

## Appendix G: Program Delivery Timeline

Month	Description
November 2020	Marketing materials are created <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper and digital brochures designed, printed</li> <li>• Social media pages for Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. are created and shared</li> <li>• Program Director reaches out to community organizations to have marketing materials featured on websites, in printed materials such as newsletters</li> <li>• AIFS publishes SADA webpage on its main website, with link to application</li> </ul>
December 2020	Participant recruitment begins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director reaches out to community organizations that are advertising the SADA program (above) for mailing lists, in-person presentations/visits to promote the program at agencies and school districts</li> <li>• Director monitors online applications as they come in</li> </ul> Program Leaders are hired and trained by AIFS

December 2020-April 2021	<p>Enrollment Window</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director continues recruitment within Fairfield County, CT, monitors if sufficient application numbers are coming in. If not, they begin marketing and recruiting in the rest of Connecticut, and possibly New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island if necessary to reach the 15-participant enrollment goal.</li> <li>• Program Director views applications and accepts participants on a rolling basis</li> <li>• Program Director holds interviews with accepted participant and family members</li> <li>• Application window closes once 15 applicants have been enrolled, or the end of April arrives</li> </ul> <p>Program Director and Leaders plan lessons/activities for Predeparture Training</p>
May-August 2021	<p>Predeparture Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Director and Leaders meet twice a week with participants and their families (to start) leading up to the on-campus portion (see Appendix F for details)</li> <li>• Program Director collects predeparture surveys for post-program evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Individual Needs Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program leaders work with assigned participants' families to account for all participant needs while on campus</li> </ul>
June-August 2021	<p>Program Director works with Yale for logistical planning: dorm rooms, meal plans, participant identification cards, classroom use, International Fair room use, discussion of medical needs with the Health Center, collaboration on Crisis Management Plan, etc.</p>

August 2021	<p>On campus portion of SADA program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants arrive and are settled in dorms</li> <li>• Program runs 6 nights, 7 days- see Appendix F for curriculum/activities outline</li> <li>• Program Director updates SADA website's daily feed to keep family members informed of the day's activities</li> </ul>
September-November 2021	<p>Program Leaders facilitate post-program communications between SADA participants and Yale international peers.</p> <p>Program Director facilitates post-program evaluations of participants, international students, and AIFS/SADA program staff, writes final report giving suggestions for future planning</p>
December 2021	<p>Using August 2021 evaluation data, Program Director works with AIFS to run SADA at Yale again in August 2022, as well as look to expand the program onto other university-partner campuses.</p>