

Expanding Diversity and Equity in Affinity Travel

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Teaching Through
Tourism Symposium







**Educational experiences and
cultural travel programs that
include and highlight diversity.**



Diversity



- **Diversity is understanding, accepting, and valuing differences between people.**
 - **It's respecting and appreciating what makes people different, in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, experiences, and national origin.**
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Equity



- **Equity is everyone being treated the same way, regardless of need or any other individual differences.**
 - **Equal opportunity and the same levels of support for all segments of society.**
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Travel Programs

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Why should diversity and equity be factored?



Why It Matters

Respectful engagement and interaction with the people and culture of a destination

- It's good to understand the viewpoints of others
- It's important to experience other cultures and get immersed in it to really learn
- Experiencing other cultures helps us all appreciate and celebrate our differences
- You can observe and learn without exploiting – if done right
- If we are all equal, then there is value in our learning about our differences; as no lived experience is more important than another

Inclusion, Representation, and Unconscious Bias



Important to understand the differences as they play a role in diversity and equity.

Inclusion

- The action or state of including or being included within a group or structure
- Involves an authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging

Representation

- The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a certain nature
- The misrepresentation of underserved communities is a significant issue with damaging consequences

Unconscious Bias

- Negative associations that people unknowingly hold (also known as hidden bias)
- They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness

For Consideration



Studies have indicated that life experiences, biases, and exposure to cultures (or lack there of) affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware of how they are impacted.



TABLE EXERCISE

Exercise Instructions



- Discuss three (3) questions, one at a time, for 2 minutes each
- Participants at each table will state their answer to the first question only, keeping their responses to 30 - 45 seconds
 - Note: All participants may have time to share and sharing it not required
- While people are answering the question, the table scribe jots down answers
- Each person answers using “I” statements about their experiences; others at the table listen only and do not respond directly or ask questions
- Once 2 minutes are up, the facilitate will instruct the room to start answering the next question
- Once all 3 questions have been answered, the table talks together for 2 minutes and discusses any interesting insights that they want to share as a group (no names should be mentioned when sharing)
- A table representation from four (4) tables will stand and take one (1) minute to share insights from the table discussing the three questions

Table Exercise Questions



- Was culture and diversity discussed during your childhood (during your school years) whether at home or at school?
- What direct experiences with people of different cultures have you had as an adult?
- What role do you feel travel has in improving diversity, equity, and unconscious bias?

Best Practices

When you're booking programs/tours

- Ask about the diversity of the tours/programs – what will be included
- When possible, use diverse companies to plan/book your tours that reflect the culture you want to experience
- Reference resources and groups that will educate you about diversity
- Think about how you want your group to “be changed” or feel when the program is done – communicate those objectives to your planners/operators



Best Practices

When you're planning programs/tours



- Research the culture and heritage of the destination(s), as well as what's culturally appropriate (and not) - share those details with travelers in advance
- Create plans with traditional activities, authentic local food, festivals, and if possible, views of city and rural areas
- Hire local when possible and work with companies who reflect the culture
- Work with local tourism boards/destination marketing organization (DMO); have local experts review plans



Best Practices

When you're attending

- Preparing for a cultural tour takes planning and research, just like any other travel you would do to a foreign place
- Review your itineraries and learn a little about the destinations before visiting
- Look for information about what cultural activities you will experience; if not included, ask questions
- Ask for information on what's appropriate so you can prepare for your tour

Best Practices

Destinations

- Create cultural travel itineraries that operators and others can reference; be sure information about existing itineraries is readily available
- Work with tour operators and companies to prepare them to support diversity and cultural tours
- Create a list/database for you and others to reference when seeking diverse partners and cultural activities/events
- Work with diverse influencers to have assets (such as images) and resources that can be references and shared



Practical Tools

- How are you choosing photographs to use in your promotional materials?
- What about selections in your bibliographies? Make room to include books that look at social justice issues in the places you are visiting.
- Create a list of topics for participants to consider prior to departure and include links to relevant podcasts.
- Make sure your accompanying staff and local guides have received all the above and has been well-briefed.
- Ask your travel partner to highlight minority-owned business that have been included in the trip.
- Build in time for reflection – meet for 30 minutes prior to dinner for those who want to share their thoughts of the day.



THANK YOU!

Questions

Special Note:

If you want to be part of the ETC DEI Community, which meets regularly to connect on DEI and Educational Travel issues, please see Janet Moore for the sign up on the sheet.



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