

International Internship for Global Leadership Program Group Program Summer 2015 RFP

Name of Program: Campaign for social inclusion
Country/Location: Prague, Czech Republic
Dates/Duration: June 5 – July 18 (6 weeks)
Length of Work-week: 30 hours
Faculty/Staff Leaders: Christine Novak
Estimated number of Participants: 4 (all to be funded)

Overview

Social exclusion is a reality for many children and adults, arising from multi-dimensional processes but most certainly resulting in unequal access to basic human necessities such as housing, healthcare, education, and employment. Despite Western cultures' ideals of freedom and equality, for some life consists of utter poverty which may foster a sense of helplessness, entice a life of crime, or explode into righteous anger. The Roma are a people who have known long-standing exclusion, with Nazi death camps at one extreme and many more subtle acts of denial to a life of dignity. Because of the almost universal non-acceptance of Roma as a group, gaining understanding of the variables stemming from and perpetuating exclusion can serve as a template for designing a campaign for social inclusion of all people existing outside the mainstream. It is also salient to focus on Roma culture since the United States does not identify this group as a minority or for the most part distinguish the Roma, making it possible to confront the attitudes and practices from a fresh, non-biased perspective.

This program will be an applied internship designed to foster understanding of major contributors to social exclusion. Through service to Roma communities and participation in NGO activities, students will focus on Roma issues as a base for exploration. They will then develop an online platform to serve as a catalyst for innovation and communication to promote inclusive attitudes. This development will support ongoing efforts toward connecting students, professionals and lay persons alike for the purposes of exchanging ideas and fostering networks to create change.

Program objectives

1. Through immersion in Czech culture, students will increase their multi-cultural competence and use this lens to gain a critical understanding of the process of social exclusion.
2. In cooperation with local Roma-focused non-governmental organizations, students will gain knowledge of policies and practices that impact social exclusion, and gain experience in efforts designed to increase equity in housing, employment, health and education.
3. Students will extend their professional networks to others with similar interests from NGOs, Charles University, and government agencies while developing a sense of professionalism.
4. Drawing from these experiences and their academic foundations, students will collaboratively create an online campaign that will support a movement toward social inclusion of individuals "outside" the mainstream Czech culture.
5. Through this work, students will begin to address significant issues surrounding social disparity which can carry over in the transition from school to career, whether in the US or elsewhere.

Program activities

Students will be scheduled from 10 am until 5 pm, Monday through Friday throughout the duration of the internship. Additionally, there will be several full day or overnight trips, though most weekends will be free for personal travel or other activities.

During the first week of the internship, students will be introduced to key personnel associated with inclusive efforts within the Czech Republic or having expertise related to multicultural issues. The

purpose of these meetings will be to gain an overview of the issues and concerns regarding exclusion of Roma, what it means to be excluded, and social/historical models used to manage cultural differences. Some of this orientation will take place at the American Center at the American Embassy. Students will also visit excluded communities where NGOs are working to support children and families in getting basic needs met. This first week is focused on problem identification.

The second and third weeks of the internship will focus on partnering with established NGOs to learn more specifically about policies and programs designed to improve the conditions for excluded minorities. Students will assist with ongoing projects across domains of education, health, employment and housing according to the students' particular interests and skills. These support activities may include, for example, editing English translations, researching funding sources including social services, documenting issues or best practices, assisting with development of websites to disseminate information. These activities will provide a deeper understanding of the processes contributing to social exclusion. Students will keep a journal about their experience of these issues and ways they may create change. This second phase is focused on building conceptual understanding as well as operationalizing the issues.

Week four will be a transitional week. Students will be involved in a service project to directly support a Roma community, while turning their attention to collaborative problem solving to plan a creative project that will help to challenge stereotypes and prejudice. Pooling their individual insights and skills, they will be guided to brainstorm and create innovative resources (i.e., tools, presentations, or actions) that can potentially reach professionals and lay persons (via online distribution) in a way that will challenge others to examine ideas which act as barriers to inclusion.

During week five, students will be actively working together, across disciplines to carry out their project. Outside participants will be invited to critique the process in order to keep the outcome meaningful. This phase of the internship is focused on application of knowledge to the immediate issues in creative, new ways.

The last week of the internship will be used to prepare a final presentation, detailing the course of development of the students' final project and providing suggestions for future actions. This presentation will be given at the American Center at the end of the week. The final week also will include evaluation of the internship via student and NGO feedback forms. At this point, students should have gained valuable knowledge about Czech and Romani cultures in relation to the process of social exclusion, and be able to extend this understanding to more familiar issues of inclusion in the US.

Throughout the 6 weeks, students will participate in a number of cultural expeditions. These may include a visit to Prague Castle; Terezin concentration camp; Museum of Communism; Museum of Romani Culture; the DOX Gallery (which showcases minority issues); Cesky rozhlas (radio station which broadcasts Romnai news); Mucha Museum. The purpose of these planned visits will be to help students gain a perspective on Czech life to better grapple with the current zeitgeist. Students will have time to choose cultural activities that coincide more directly with their own interests, as well as enjoy non-scheduled cultural outings with volunteers. Prague and its surrounds offer a wealth of cultural opportunities, including music, art, literature, architecture, theater, and natural sciences (see list below, following budget).

To encourage intercultural exchange, we also will arrange for students to have ongoing contact with native Czech young adults. These young adults will provide necessary language translation services at the NGOs as well as some of the cultural activities. They also can help provide guidance or assistance with navigating Czech culture, and offer yet another perspective on barriers to social inclusion.

Target Population

In order to have the greatest impact, it is desirable to recruit students from a variety of programs on campus. Students from journalism or English, the arts, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, computer science, or business would each bring valuable training and knowledge to this internship. Students with additional interests in education, public health, law, women's issues, or sustainable development would further appreciate nuances in the issues to be explored. A personal interest and background in human rights, particularly related to promoting educational equity, will be given priority in selecting participants.

Other Funding Sources

We will submit a grant to the American Embassy to help cover the administrative costs for Inclusio.

Faculty/Staff Accompanying Students

(Christine Novak) I will accompany students throughout the internship. During the first week, I will help the students acclimate to the new surroundings, (e.g., get them situated in the hostel and introduced to the project mentor; orient them to safety, language, navigation, money and food; present the itinerary, expectations and evaluation; and begin to provide background for the work ahead). During the second and third weeks, we will visit other cultural sites, discuss assigned readings, and contribute to an ongoing blog. In particular, my role will be to monitor and discuss the students' experiences in reference to their perceptions of cultural differences, in order to begin to consolidate ideas for the creative work to take place in weeks 4-6, and to support their activities so that they are able to accomplish their goals. During the creative phase, I will serve as a mentor and facilitator, helping students to find productive representations for advocacy, while the actual design process for the campaign will be their own.

Faculty/Staff with Similar Experience

(Christine Novak) This will be the second year to offer this internship. In 2010, I spent 6 months in Prague working with an NGO focusing on Roma education issues. This partnership was initially developed given my background in school psychology, and prior work with attitude change curricula and inclusion in schools. In 2006, I spent 3 months in Prague studying the educational system while on sabbatical from the University of Iowa. I have been traveling to the Czech Republic since 1977, and have experienced the transition from Communism to democracy.

Evaluation of Program upon Return

1. Presentation (audience evaluation)
2. NGO feedback
3. Student evaluations

Prerequisite Coursework

Prior studies relating to the civil rights movement, the effects of poverty, mechanisms of social change, communication skills, web design, or models of personal agency/motivation would be helpful.

Health and Safety Concerns

Prague is generally safe, and students will have local resources for consultation should any questions or difficulties arise. There is an American hospital and in the center, where the students will spend the majority of their time, and there are many people who speak English, making it fairly easy to meet one's immediate needs.

Other Issues to be Considered

While there have been demonstrations in certain localities against Roma communities, Prague has not had these problems and students will not be subjected to situations that might become volatile.

On-Site Support/Partnership

1. **Organization name:** Inclusio o.p.s., www.inclusio.cz
Contact information: Petra Zahradnikova, vzdelani@inclusio.cz
Description: Nongovernmental, non-profit organization founded in June 2013 to support equal opportunities to all children in access to quality education, support cooperation of all entities in the integration of minorities within the Czech Republic, and to support individuals in gaining independence.
2. **Organization name:** Romea o.s., <http://www.romea.cz/en/>
Contact information: Zdeněk Ryšavý, romea@romea.cz
Description: Nongovernmental, non-profit organization dedicated to providing news, information, education, and cooperation toward a democratic and tolerant society with emphasis on uniting people in the Czech Republic against racism.
3. **Organization name:** Otevřená společnost, <http://www.otevrenaspolecnost.cz>
Contact information: Marek Hojsík, marek.hojcik@osops.cz
Description: Open Society–founded NGO designed to strengthen civil society in the Czech Republic through support to small Roma NGOs, promoting human rights.
4. **Organization name:** Charles University, <http://www.cuni.cz/>
Contact Information: Marie Homerová, m.homerova@centrum.cz
Description: Council on International Educational Exchange