



YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING Intercultural Exchange Programs

WHY YFU?

YFU's distinctive brand of cultural exchange opens minds and hearts, enables learning that transforms lives, and ultimately helps to make us citizens of one world.

Our cultural exchange programs provide the ultimate reality check to a worldview based on stereotypes. In helping people of all ages to make the world their home, we help them to appreciate differences and embrace similarities.

As a staff and volunteer-supported network of more than 70 international partner countries, we help participants broaden their perspective through immersive experiences that share a culture from the inside out, promoting the understanding that we are all citizens of one world. We stay with you every step of the way, creating a safe, supportive environment in which to explore and gain a deeper understanding of different cultures.



We believe cultural exchange reinforces our common humanity by underscoring that people everywhere experience the same emotions, joys and challenges. YFU offers the journey of a lifetime, an adventure that allows you to discover the best in yourself and your family, forge lifelong connections, and change the way you see the world.

At its core, YFU is a catalyst for positive global change. Students experience personal growth, and their broadened perspectives ripple through schools and across entire communities.

Join YFU and take a positive first step in a lifelong journey of international connection.

WHAT WE DO?

The long-term objective of YFU and youth exchange is to engage young people in personal development opportunities that will increase their leadership capacity and improve international understanding and public diplomacy.

VIRTUAL EXCHANGES: Drawing upon six decades of intercultural exchange experience, YFU virtual exchanges expose participants to daily life in different societies in a modern context. Through this we help youth to recognize that we are citizens of a single world and provide new tools for the next generation to create peaceful societies.

PHYSICAL EXCHANGES: We place YFU students from around the world with host families who are willing to open their homes and share their traditions with an international student. During their academic and cultural experience, students learn that acceptance and tolerance are essential for success in a global society. The experience is transformative not only for the student but their host families as well, as they too learn about another culture – without even leaving home.



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Contact Erin Helland, Director of Virtual Exchanges
EHELLAND@YFU.ORG | YFUUSA.ORG

FROM VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT TO IN-PERSON EXCHANGES, YFU'S CONTINUUM OF PROGRAMS EXPOSE PARTICIPANTS TO EVERYDAY LIFE IN A DIFFERENT SOCIETY.

TIMELESS MISSION

YFU advances intercultural understanding, mutual respect and social responsibility through educational exchanges for youth, families and communities.

YFU's history began humbly in the United States in 1951 in an effort to heal the wounds of World War II. By teaching a group of young Germans how families lived together in the United States, the hope was that they would be motivated to help rebuild their homeland according to what they had experienced on exchange. Dr. Rachel Andresen who founded YFU and served as our longtime Executive Director brought this vision to life.

Prior to YFU's conception in 1948, Dr. Andresen was in attendance when the city lights of Amsterdam were turned on for the first time after the war. That moment of sudden illumination of the entire city was so impressive she vowed to do everything she could with her life "so that the lights would never go out again." In 1973, her commitment to international youth exchange was recognized when she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In today's world, the principles of youth exchange hold as much relevance as ever. At YFU, we believe that it is within local communities that we will make a global impact and a more peaceful world. By engaging in dialogue with real people we come to understand that our similarities are greater than our differences.



ABOUT YFU

For learners of all ages who want a life-changing cultural exchange experience, **Youth For Understanding** (YFU) offers a wide range of opportunities to see the world up close. The global YFU network, consisting of partners in more than 70 different countries, is united by the belief that curiosity about the world expands cultural awareness and acceptance of other ways to live, which leads to broader perspective and greater understanding.



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YFU's unique intercultural exchanges open minds and hearts, enable learning that transforms lives, change the way you see the world and help to overcome stereotypes. Selected to administer more government and corporate scholarships than any other high school exchange program, YFU has remained a trusted leader of intercultural exchange programs since 1951 because of its commitment to safety, reputation for quality, and exceptional support services.

ABOUT IEARN-USA

We are pleased to collaborate with iEARN (International Education and Resource Network) for the **YFU Virtual Exchange Initiative**. **iEARN** was launched in 1988 as a pilot project between the US and former USSR to demonstrate that students could use emerging new technologies to work together on meaningful educational projects that enhance the quality of life on the planet. iEARN has grown to become the world's largest educational network for project-based learning on pressing world issues, with programs in more than 125 countries.



iEARN-USA's mission is to enable young people worldwide, working in collaboration and dialogue, to make a meaningful contribution to the health and welfare of the planet and its people.