

# ORIENTATION COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

## YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING



Acknowledgments: Many thanks to volunteers Kathy Ulm and Madeleine Henderson, both from the Northeast District, for their vast contributions to this handbook. Their work drew deeply from that of volunteer Gordon Snow in the Founders' District.

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This Orientation Coordinator's Handbook offers the basics of YFU orientation planning. Included are suggestions for who plans and delivers the programs, scheduling, choosing locations and other site considerations, needed facilitators, a checklist of preparation tasks, ideas for social activities, setting the agenda, and a plethora of other planning, presentation, and follow-up needs.

All YFU orientation materials are created based on these beliefs:

1. All participants have something to offer as well as to learn.
2. Learning takes place throughout the exchange experience – in anticipation of, and in preparation for, the exchange, throughout the on-program period, and in preparation for return home. Materials are offered to meet needs at all times.
3. Well-prepared adults, with or without formal teaching experience but with training in the use of the orientation materials, can conduct successful orientation programs.

Generally speaking, most YFU orientations are planned and delivered by volunteers. YFU empowers trained volunteers to conduct these important programs because the local volunteers

- have personal connections with the students and host families in their communities;
- are familiar with the cultural norms in their regions and communities;
- have diverse backgrounds that enhance the orientation experience by providing various perspectives for all participants;
- have a vested interest in the success of the YFU program in their communities.

The first section of this handbook describes each orientation, its purpose, and its objectives.

The second section involves a detailed discussion of the orientation planning process, applicable to all orientations in any area of the country.

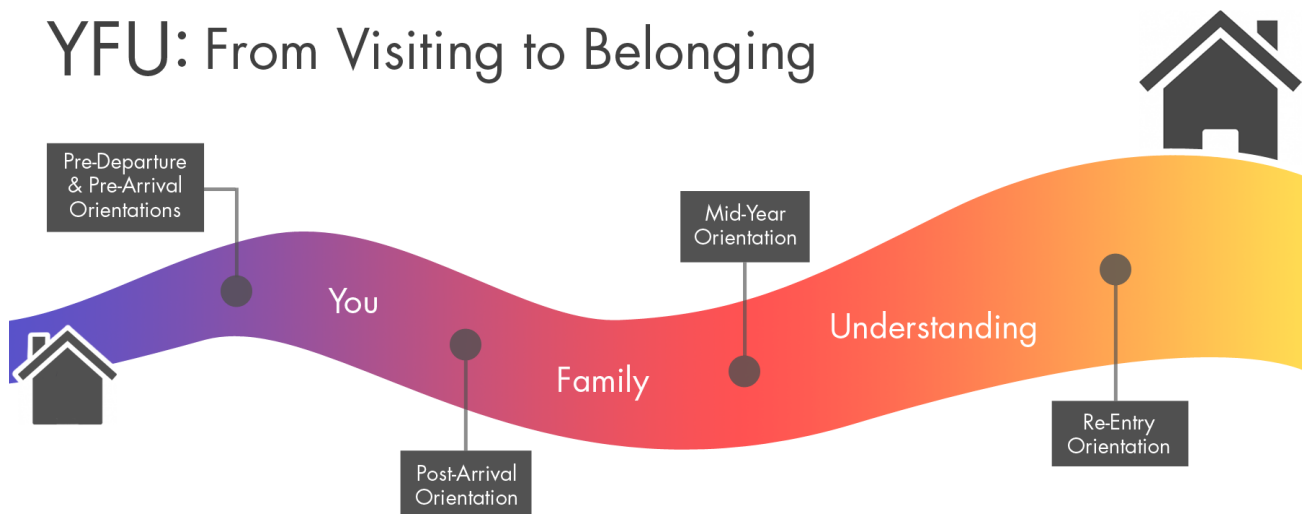
The third section includes sample invitations, attendance sheets, evaluations, and a checklist for planning any YFU orientation.

The last section includes Department of State and YFU regulations and requirements.

YFU orientations are designed to be guide posts for students and families as they travel through the exchange experience together. While each orientation (host family pre-arrival, student pre-departure, host family and student post-arrival, student mid-year, and student re-entry) is a distinct entity with distinct objectives, they are tied to the preceding and succeeding orientations by common threads and language. In this way, the individual orientation programs, when experienced together, form a cohesive whole in order that students and families meet the overarching goals of the YFU orientation cycle. It is therefore important that the prescribed curriculum be utilized and that the primary facilitators for each orientation communicate with one another so that issues raised in one orientation can be referenced in the next.

## A COMMON THREAD

# YFU: From Visiting to Belonging



## YFU: From Visiting to Belonging

The international exchange experience is a journey that YFU lays out for students and families. Starting as visitors (or having a visitor in the home), the ultimate destination is belonging and developing a meaningful understanding of the impact of exchange. Students and families control this journey, using the power of choice and communication as tools to steer the experience. YFU's role is that of guide, using orientation programming, and the support structure as their tools. In this way, each orientation provides a stopping point along the journey; a time for reflection on progress made and consideration of the next goal ahead. The concept used to illustrate this structure and provide common language is YFU: From Visiting to Belonging. The letters of YFU are used in the following way:

### Y – YOU:

During the process of deciding to participate in exchange and through the pre-arrival and pre-departure orientations, students and families are focused on themselves (the “you” from an orienter’s perspective). “Why am I doing this? How will it affect me? Will I be successful?” It is normal that one’s thoughts about joining in a YFU experience are focused on oneself up to this point.

## F – FAMILY:

By the time of post-arrival orientation, students and families should be confident in their decisions, their current state, and themselves (the Y), ready to shift their focus to the F – family. Within the larger journey from visiting to belonging, is a smaller one, from Y (you) to F (family), which occurs throughout the Fall. In this time period, host families must focus on adjusting to the changed dynamics that a new family member creates, helping to integrate the student into the family unit. Students, for their part, are simultaneously beginning to consider their position and responsibilities in the family unit, recognizing that they are expected and being encouraged to become a true member of this American family. Ideally, when students and families join together again at the mid-year orientation, a solid new family unit will exist.

U – UNDERSTANDING: By the time of mid-year orientation, the F (family) should be well on its way to being a stable and well-functioning unit in its new state. And thus, with the benefit of reflection and looking toward the re-entry orientation, students and families are ready to move toward U (understanding). This journey between mid-year and re-entry, they will begin to understand the deep personal and greater societal impact of the exchange, home-stay experience. As they begin to understand their newly acquired social responsibility in their communities, and the larger world, they will develop an appreciation for and confidence in their status as someone who belongs. This is a journey toward belonging not only in a new family, but in a global society.

Just as there is a structure to tie the orientation programs together, there are also teaching tools to do the same. These devices are useful to help illustrate points at the orientations, they create a common language, and they likely become part of the student and family's communication system.

## TOOLS

### 3-5-8 Choice Chart

As students and families travel along the route from visiting to belonging, using the tool of making choices allows them each to become the driver. 3-5-8: Choice Chart is a tool used to help students and families understand that they must take responsibility for their exchange experience and show this through the choices they make. In that context, 3-5-8: Choice Chart serves as a measurement tool for participants' level of involvement and transition from visitor to belonging, with each choice improving or lessening the experience. Specifically, students and family members are encouraged to measure themselves at the end of a day, a week, or an experience by using the 3-5-8: Choice Chart.



## The Iceberg Analogy

The iceberg analogy, used to illustrate the influences of culture on behavior, is part of each orientation such that participants can deepen their awareness that the underwater portion of the iceberg (attitudes, beliefs, worldview) is not simple to discern but rather gradually becomes clearer with exposure to various behaviors over time. Further, while the analogy is introduced in depth at the pre and post-arrival orientations, it serves as an easy point of reference, or common language, at subsequent orientations.



## Communication

Since we know that a majority of support issues have at their root poor or ineffective communication, each orientation must focus a discrete segment of time on the need for excellent communication within the family unit. As students' English proficiency increases by mid-year, participants will recognize that their ability to communicate effectively is not only directly connected to their successes with YFU but that this is also a significant life skill.

As orientation content is reviewed and updated through the National Office, these ideas will be incorporated into sessions. Meanwhile, volunteers experienced in orientations can easily plan to integrate them into their existing sessions.

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## PURPOSE OF ORIENTATIONS

Youth For Understanding is an international community united by a commitment to increased world understanding through the international family living experience. The purpose of YFU orientations is to enrich the quality of the experience for the participants by helping people learn about the cultural exchange experience, live with it, and grow from it. We want to encourage constructive and non stressful interaction between members of different cultures. This is done by providing materials and programs for students, natural parents, and host families and by providing materials and training materials for YFU staff and volunteers to enable them to conduct orientations.

Orientation is not one activity that YFU gives to students and families, such as a vaccination, to orient them prior to the program and protect them from difficulties during the experience. Rather, orientation is the total combination of materials and programs that are offered to students and families throughout their experience with Youth For Understanding.

Distribution of materials and delivering orientation programs are the shared responsibility of YFU partner countries and YFU USA. Monitoring orientation budgets, writing and revision of materials, orientation training and development, and supervising, supporting, and monitoring orientations worldwide are also shared responsibilities. The goal is program equality rather than just uniformity for participants throughout the YFU community.

### OVERARCHING ORIENTATION GOALS

While each YFU orientation has its own specific objectives, these are the goals of the sum total of our orientation materials and programs:

1. Development of enthusiasm for meaningful intercultural dialog
2. Development of realistic expectations for the international exchange and home-stay experience
3. Understanding of YFU's procedures and policies for maintaining the safety of all participants
4. Understanding that culture influences behavior and one's perception of others' cultural norms
5. Development of skills necessary for adjusting to, and integrating into, another culture
6. Deepening appreciation for one's own culture
7. Understanding of how to appreciate other cultures
8. Improvement of communication and problem solving skills
9. Development of a sense of social responsibility
10. Realistic assessment of personal growth as a result of the experience
11. Development of the skills for becoming global citizens, with confidence, direction, commitment, and an awareness of the interdependence of nations

The pre-arrival host family orientation is not the beginning of orientation for host families. Rather it is one piece in a sequence that began with the recruitment and selection interview, and continued with the materials they have received, including their Host Family Handbook. Neither is it the end of their orientation. They will be invited to attend the post-arrival, mid-year, and re-entry orientations with their student.

It is important to keep this sequence in mind when focusing on the pre-arrival orientation. The various phases of orientation should serve to reinforce information and introduce new ideas in a timely fashion, not be repetitious and redundant. Therefore, the content of the pre-arrival orientation program serves to check understanding of the YFU program, its policies, procedures, and support systems, along with clarifying expectations for the hosting experience. These are accomplished by providing forums to hear about other hosting experiences and opportunities to discuss typical situations that occur in the cross-cultural family living environment. Though advice-giving is a part of the orientation, the emphasis is more on providing families with the tools with which to face the unexpected and to work through the difficulties, having sufficient knowledge of adolescent behaviors, typical adjustment patterns, and YFU program resources.

Through the pre-arrival orientation program, families should be encouraged to see the continuity and sequence of the orientation programs and materials. This is facilitated in the sessions by drawing on their knowledge from the Host Family Handbook and using it as a reference piece.

### What is a pre-arrival orientation?

The pre-arrival orientations are programs where groups of families come together to discuss the preparations they are making for the hosting experience and the expectations they have about hosting a teenager from another country.

The program itself is a part of a sequence of events that help host families understand and prepare for receiving an exchange student. It follows the selection interview and receipt of the Host Family Handbook. It is followed by the post-arrival orientation that both exchange students and host families attend approximately 6-10 weeks after they have begun their cross-cultural living experience.

The pre-arrival program gives families a chance to think about their own family structure and how another person will fit in, and what they can do to make that transition smoother. This program is especially important for families who do not have any children, have no teenage children, or have limited experience with teenagers in general. It also helps families to understand the policies and procedures of the YFU organization.

### Pre-Arrival Orientation Objectives for Host Families:

- To establish comfortable and realistic expectations
- To understand YFU, its policies and procedures
- To receive suggestions for dealing with family and student adjustment in order to successfully live together



- To get ideas for maximizing the experience for all
- To identify YFU resources
- To maintain or increase enthusiasm for YFU, the exchange experience, and the host family role as part of the program

Because Youth For Understanding is officially recognized by the U.S. Department of State, certain requirements have been attached to our program. One requires that all host families receive an orientation from the sponsoring organization to help them prepare for the experience.

#### When should the pre-arrival orientation be scheduled?

Ideally, this orientation should be conducted at least one month prior to the arrival of the students. This way, families have the opportunity to develop realistic expectations. The orientation should provide food for thought, and families may need time to digest the content of the program.

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## POST-ARRIVAL

Once students and host families have been living together for six to ten weeks, the initial glamour of the experience will have worn off. Having difficulty communicating may no longer be just embarrassing, it may be maddening or intimidating. The changes in family dynamics may be much more severe than initially expected. The misunderstandings due to not really knowing each other may be frustrating. One or both parties may have realized they had false expectations and/or motivations; there may be real disappointments.

What can the post-arrival orientation do for families and students? First, by simply bringing them together with others in the same situation and showing that YFU is there to help is great reassurance that their feelings are normal. Secondly, the program offers all participants the chance to really discuss what is difficult for them, and to get suggestions and answers from peers and staff who understand. Being able to meet in groups separately from family members gives students permission to discuss certain concerns that might be difficult to do in a family group alone.

In addition, the post-arrival orientation offers some of the tools and background that will help family members sort out the experience and work toward successes. Finally, the program offers constructive sessions where families work together toward common goals.

The post-arrival orientation is perhaps one of the more difficult of the orientation programs to conduct: it requires careful preparation. The central feature of the separate discussion groups necessitates several resource people or helpers who must be selected and briefed prior to the program.

It is crucially important that families attend the post-arrival orientation. Pre-departure orientation for students and pre-arrival orientation for host families are initial steps in the learning process. However, by the time of the post-arrival, the experience has become a reality, and there is a new "need to know" that was not present earlier. Some information is repeated; its importance merits that. The post-arrival should be seen as a complement to the previous orientation, not in any way a substitute.

Separate activity programs for host family and/or students after arrival must not be seen as a substitute for the post-arrival orientation either. In order to build the family unit and to make the experience better,

all parties need to be present, working toward a common goal. The exception is very small children who may not be able to participate meaningfully and thus should not attend.

### What is a post-arrival orientation?

During post-arrival orientations, groups of host families and their exchange students come together to discuss mutual issues and concerns, to share their experiences so far, and to learn more about maximizing their experiences together. This orientation complements the host family pre-arrival and student pre-departure orientations; they do not replace either. A few sessions may be similar to previous orientations because of their importance; adjustment and policies and procedures are two of these.

Because post arrival orientations take place after students and families have lived together, this is an excellent time to redirect energies and revitalize the experiences in light of adaptation and adjustment. At the orientation, students meet with other students, returnees, and area representatives to discuss their concerns and adjustment problems. Host families have a forum to ask their questions and get answers.

### Post-Arrival Orientation Objectives for Host Families and Students:

- To promote a better understanding of the student's process of adjustment to a new culture and a new family
- To promote a better understanding of the family's process of adjustment to a new member of their family
- To revitalize the commitment of all participants to making the experience better
- To encourage talking about the experience to date, in a supportive environment
- To review YFU policies and procedures

Because Youth For Understanding is officially recognized by the State Department, certain "minimum standards" have been attached to our program. One minimum standard requires that international students and their host families receive specific orientations from the sponsoring organization to help them prepare for and to maximize the experience.

### When should the post-arrival orientation be scheduled?

Ideally, this orientation should be conducted between six and ten weeks after the arrival of the students. (It's usually in late September or early October for the fall semester program, and in February for the spring semester program.) This way, families and students come together with volunteers when reality may be setting in and participants may have new awareness of the needs and issues. By this point, most students' English proficiency will be sufficient to understand the content of the program, too.

Mid-year orientation takes place when students and host families have been living together for about five months. The initial glamour of the experience has worn off. As life together has become more routine, many families are pleased that they have reached a level of familiarity they hoped for. Within other families, however, feelings of impatience, boredom or dissatisfaction may be brewing.

At this time, many exchange students begin to realize that the year is half over, and they are beginning to contemplate what they have accomplished. Some students look back and feel great about their new home and the progress they've made. Others may feel, for example, that they aren't learning English fast enough, don't have enough friends, don't live an exciting enough life, or aren't satisfied with the exchange experience. If student-family adjustment was difficult earlier in the year, some of the same issues may resurface even if they appeared to have been resolved. Mid-year is a time of assessment for every member of the family.

The purpose of the mid-year orientation is to provide additional support to students at the midpoint of their exchange experience. It also serves as a "maintenance check" for any issues that may need addressing to assist the student in developing skills to continue a successful experience.

In some cases, students may have moved to a second family and/or a new school and had to go through the adjustment process for a second time. The second adjustment may have left them with even less time to accomplish their goals with family, friends, and school, and they may demonstrate some signs of anxiety. The mid-year orientation gives these students an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings as well as to seek advice from YFU volunteers and other students.

### What is a mid-year orientation?

The mid-year orientation gives all students an opportunity to examine their experience thus far, to identify their concerns, and to set realistic goals for the time remaining. Students on the YFU second semester program (Six-month Program) may be included in the mid-year orientation to address the concerns or anxieties they may experience by arriving in the middle of the school year, when most students have made friends and become involved in group activities. It provides all students a sense of belonging to a group that they can rely on for support.

The mid-year orientation was developed and conducted by YFU volunteers in Michigan in 1976, when they noticed some student experiencing cabin fever: The cold, dark days of winter and the post-holiday season lull combined to make for a dreary mood among students. Recognizing this, several volunteers decided to organize a social activity to socialize and to discuss adjustment concerns. The activity proved quite beneficial to students and volunteers alike. Other field areas followed suit, resulting in the formal program we now have.

### Mid-Year Orientation Objectives for Students:

The goals of the mid-year orientation are:

- To energize or revitalize the commitment of students to improving their experience
- To encourage discussions of the challenges of exchange, personal changes, and learning, in a supportive environment

- To establish individual student goals for the remainder of the experience

### When should mid-year orientations be scheduled?

Ideally, the mid-year orientation should be conducted approximately five months after international students arrive in the US, usually late January or early February. By this time, students are aware of the complexities of being on exchange and can assist one another in problem solving.

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## RE-ENTRY

An American YFU student stated the issue so clearly when she said, "I experienced two trips and two experiences abroad. One was in Japan; the other was going home."

Difficulties in readjusting to one's home culture have been recognized by business, government, Peace Corps, development agencies, exchange programs, and missionaries for some time. This adjustment is referred to as re-entry or reverse culture shock.

Re-entry problems may occur for a number of reasons, including the following:

1. The home country was glorified by the person while living elsewhere; the realities of home don't match the expectations.
2. The person living in another culture has changed because of the experiences s/he has had, frequently including developing more interest in the world as a whole, other cultures, the interdependence of nations, as well as maturing and becoming more self-confident. They return home as a "new" or different person.
3. The returnee may face a new or different support system than was in place when s/he left. Family dynamics may have changed; the returnee may have to repeat a grade in school; there may be more or less personal freedom; natural parents, relatives, or school officials may not grasp the changes in the way the returnee thinks, acts, or feels.
4. The person's actual standard of living may have changed, having more or less money to spend, fewer or more luxuries, and fewer or more responsibilities for household tasks.
5. There may be a change in the person's role, including where s/he fits within the family, from someone special to one of the crowd.
6. Their experiences and time abroad may set them apart from former peers just because of their absence, such as being a class behind their peers or not being on a sports team.

Perhaps the worst part of re-entry is being completely unprepared for it. A person returning to their own culture does not expect adjustment problems because the country, its customs and language are known to them. And, in not expecting difficulties, one may not be alert to potential difficulties.

The same symptoms of culture shock may occur in reverse culture shock: minor illnesses, depression, withdrawal, drop in school grades, excessive eating or not eating, etc., all of which could be attributed to other things if one does not realize that these may be common symptoms of reverse culture shock.

Being unaware may make it more difficult to find someone who understands and may be able to offer help.

It is precisely to prepare students for re-entry that YFU conducts the re-entry orientations before they return home. Not only do the orientations help students anticipate some of the adjustment problems they may face, they are also encouraged to think positively about new skills and attitudes that they have gained that will make their re-adjustment easier.

### What is a re-entry orientation?

Re-entry orientations give students a chance to look at what they have learned during their exchange experience, plan how to draw the experience to a close, and anticipate some of the adjustments that they will need to make when returning home. With their peers sharing thoughts aloud, students have an opportunity to clarify their own thoughts. This is a most informative and rewarding time for YFU staff, since the fruit of all their efforts will be clear.

It is important that the re-entry program be positive and constructive. Returnees can be very helpful as they have experienced re-entry and can give very positive, helpful suggestions, but should not detract from time current students need to assess themselves and share with each other.

### Re-Entry Orientation Objectives for Students:

- Encourage students to discuss their experience and begin to realize how they have grown and changed as a result
- Encourage students to think about the application of skills and knowledge gained through the experience to the world community
- Help students deal with the difficulty of saying goodbye to host family and friends, but look for good ways to stay in touch
- Aid students in identifying re-entry problems they may face and identify possible positive solutions
- Consider some of the many ways they can continue their interests in cross-cultural areas after they have returned home

### When should the re-entry orientation be scheduled?

Ideally, this orientation should be conducted one month before the departure of the students. This gives ample time for students to plan their departure while having some time to consider the re-entry concerns raised at the program.

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## PRE-DEPARTURE

The pre-departure orientation is intended to allow American students preparing to go on Study Abroad program, as well as their natural parents, to participate in learning experiences that will help them better understand the YFU program. Included are the YFU support structure, developing an understanding of the cross-cultural learning experience, identification of their own value systems, problem-solving, and identification of elements of their lifestyles that may have to change during their family living experience

abroad.

Students meet with others about to embark on various programs and share thoughts and concerns. They also meet with staff and volunteers to discuss their own mixed emotions while they have the chance to clarify and develop realistic expectations.

Natural parents hear what they can anticipate their son/daughter will experience while on program. They, too, have the opportunity to meet with staff to learn about YFU support and communication, and to ask questions.

#### Pre-Departure Orientation Objectives for Students and Natural Parents:

- To develop realistic expectations and enthusiasm for the family living experience
- To understand the process and stages of adjusting to a new family unit in a different culture
- To use a common definition of culture to identify aspects of their own culture in order to anticipate differences in the host culture and how to handle them effectively
- To actively join YFU with an understanding of its policies, procedures, and support systems

#### When should the pre-departure orientation be scheduled?

Ideally, this orientation program should be scheduled between four and six weeks prior to departure. This is close enough to the departure to motivate the students to want to learn and yet give them time to digest pre-departure suggestions. Because of the variety in departure dates of the many Study Abroad programs, it is impossible to schedule an ideal time frame for all students at once. Prior to the summer cycle of departure of most programs, a mid-May time frame is most suitable.

## PROCESS

## SCHEDULING

Schedule orientations within YFU's recommended time frame:

- Pre-Arrival Orientation for host families: In June, July or August, but before year or semester international students arrive in the US. Pre-arrival date should be given to host families during the interview. Required for all host families.

Note: If host families do not attend a group orientation, the webinar is available. One-on-one orientations used only in very limited circumstances.

- Post-Arrival Orientation for international students and host families: About six weeks after student arrival, usually in late September or early October. Avoid doing post-arrival too early. Required for all host families and international students.

Note: One-on-one orientations with an individual family and their student are allowed but must be documented. Efficacy of such orientations is questionable.

- Mid-Year Orientation for international students and host families: Usually in January or early February. Activities for host families may be included. Required only for international students.

- Re-Entry Orientation for international students: Four to six weeks before students return to their home country. Activities for host families may be included. Required only for international students.

- Pre-Departure Orientation for Study Abroad students and natural parents: Usually during the first week of June or last week in December, depending on departure date.

Note: The webinar pre-departure orientation is designed for Study Abroad students who are unable to attend an in-person pre-departure orientation; use only when other options have been exhausted.

Avoid national and religious holidays, unless there is a clear consensus that these dates are acceptable to all potential participants. (This maintains consistency with YFU's policy of non-discrimination.)

Consider significant school events involving international students: homecoming games and dances, prom, school breaks, etc.

Consider consulting host families and students about possible orientation dates, once orientation volunteers have narrowed the options. Choose potential dates within the recommended range, and consider site and facilitator availability. It is likely that any date will conflict with someone's family or school events.

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## SITE SELECTION

- Sites that are free or reasonable in price and provide the type of facilities needed are booked well in advance. Locate your site as early as possible!
- Determine approximate size of group, amount of space and number of rooms needed, and time frame.
- If the orientation includes an overnight stay for students and volunteers, determine sleeping and bath facilities.
- Consider the implications of serving beverages, snacks, meals. What will the site provide? What can be brought to the site? What may be prepared on the site? By whom? Extra costs?
- Determine whether the facility is handicapped accessible if needed.
- Determine equipment needed: chairs, tables, flip chart stand, computer with projection unit, screen, extension cord, VCR or DVD player and television, copy machine, public address system, pencil sharpener, etc., and who provides the equipment.
- Consider possible sites, for minimal or no cost:
  - Church meeting rooms, social hall, Sunday school rooms, etc.
  - Private home – living room, family room, recreation room
  - School library, classrooms, kitchen, gymnasium with bleachers, auditorium
  - Public library or bank conference room; restaurant meeting room
  - Shopping mall community room
  - College or university classrooms, conference rooms, dormitories
  - Religious retreat centers
  - YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, YWHA, 4-H, Boy/Girl Scout, church camp facilities
  - Outdoor education centers, etc.
- Make contact to determine availability and visit the site to check for suitability. Make reservation, sign paperwork, and provide deposit if required.
- Plan to make a small donation, if appropriate, to help cover costs of utilities/site.
- Determine site rules established by owner/operator of facility (or the municipality), if any:
  - Use of telephone
  - Locations for smoking, if any
  - Use of tape, tacks or other items
  - Areas for recreational activity
  - Rules for use of recreational areas



- Disposal of trash
- Supplies (soap, toilet paper, paper towels)
- Thermostat setting
- Determine with owner/operator of the facility any pre-existing damage to any equipment (broken furniture, cracked windows, kitchen items, etc.) or parts of the facility (stained or torn carpet, damage to walls or ceilings, etc.) to ensure that YFU will not be charged for any such damage.
- Reconfirm availability of the facility within a few days of the orientation to ensure that it is still available and to determine who will let the group in, what time, who will lock up, etc.

Orientation volunteers should divide the tasks that must take place before, during, and after an orientation. It is too much for one or two people to plan and conduct an orientation and also take care of shopping for supplies, meal preparation, night duty, furniture set-up, and clean up.

### PLANNING COORDINATOR

The planning coordinator is responsible for all the details that must be handled prior to the event. S/he is responsible for securing the site, sending invitations, collecting RSVPs and tracking responses for a report to the district office, preparing attendance lists, ensuring that documents are copied and put into named folders, preparing name tags, identifying session facilitators, etc. The coordinator can and should delegate as many of these tasks as there are volunteers to do them, but is the ultimate responsible person ensuring that everything gets done. Use the check list!

### SITE COORDINATOR

The site coordinator oversees the event on the given date.

### PRIMARY FACILITATOR

The primary facilitator is responsible for ensuring that all sessions are properly run and leads as many of the sessions as is deemed appropriate. S/he should be the most experienced and well-versed volunteer with the best public speaking skills among available volunteers.

### FACILITATORS

Facilitators come to orientations with a variety of skills and experiences. Using different facilitators helps maintain participant interest by showing different approaches, techniques, and training styles.

### FOOD COORDINATOR

Regardless of the length of an orientation, it will likely be necessary to have a food coordinator. The food may be snacks or may be a meal cooked on site, catered from outside, a pot luck provided by participants, or a brown bag lunch provided by participants. The food coordinator decides where food should be stored and ensures that dishes are kept hot or cold as necessary.

### OVERNIGHT VOLUNTEERS

If the orientation lasts two days, it is imperative to secure overnight volunteers. Their role should be to monitor students during their overnight/sleeping time. They must be prepared to respond if any participants feel the need to discuss issues or concerns during the night or if an emergency arises.

### SET UP / CLEAN UP VOLUNTEERS

Each site has physical needs: arranging furniture, setting up tables, placing handouts materials etc. This is the role of set up/clean-up volunteers, directed by the site coordinator. These volunteers should arrive early to ensure that doors are unlocked, signs are in place, furniture is set up correctly, etc. It may also be their responsibility, after the orientation, to store tables and chairs according to site owner's requirements, ensure that trash be removed, collect any items inadvertently left by participants, etc.

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## SUPPLIES

Supply needs differ depending upon the agenda and sessions. It is helpful to have a basket of supplies available to facilitators. A list of basics includes:

name tags	card stock for table tents
markers / whiteboard markers	recreational equipment
pencils & pens	timer/stopwatch
tape (Scotch, masking, duct)	bell
flip chart easels & flip charts	laptop computer & projector
scissors	cheater plug/s for 3-pronged plug
flags/maps	projector screen, flat screen TV, wall
paper clips & binder clips	cables for connecting equipment
construction paper	VCR or DVD
paper / index cards	additional supplies for sessions handouts and folders with names

Prior to the orientation, the site director or another volunteer should ensure that supplies are available and ready for use. Be sure that markers have not dried out, pencils are sharpened, handouts are copied, a spare projector bulb is available, etc.

The planning coordinator should collect a list of items needed by each facilitator and provide the materials at the orientation. It is up to the facilitators to plan and request what they need.

Provide paper cups and plates, plastic utensils, serving utensils, and napkins for meals and snacks. Extra paper towels, tissue, toilet paper, trash bags may be useful.

If you are not providing coffee, notify host families ahead so that they can bring their own.

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## PLANNING

A well-planned, well-organized, and well-executed orientation gives a sense of professionalism, security, and confidence in YFU; poorly planned and executed orientations have a negative effect on both host families and students.

- Confirm that the site, date, and times are firm.
- Send save-the-date email invitation at least six weeks out with RSVP details clearly indicated. Send invitations to students AND host families. Use an updated placement chart and record the responses. It is NOT the district office's responsibility to send invitations, unless someone there agrees to do it.
- Be sure the RSVP for the event clearly states the information needed: student name, names of family members attending (including siblings), number for emergency contact (for overnights), preferred family email address, and a clearly indicated email address and/or phone of the volunteer to whom responses are to be sent.
- Send fully detailed email information at least two weeks out, earlier preferred.
- All orientation team members should meet either in person or by conference call at least two weeks out to ensure that each member knows his/her role and can meet his/her commitments.
- Plan so that participants are exposed to a variety of facilitator styles if possible.
- Distribute orientation responsibilities among volunteers; keep in mind that participants, especially students, can help with food, moving furniture, clean up, etc.
- Provide opportunities for physical movement during and between sessions.
- Prepare a mutually-agreed upon agenda with the facilitators listed with their responsibilities. Provide a copy in each volunteer folder.
- Agree on a written evaluation form rather than using a generic one. Allow for some open-ended feedback. An anonymous evaluation may collect more meaningful information than a signed one. Include a space for participant comment. (See sample evaluation)
- Ensure that every facilitator is prepared for every session s/he is doing, including the ability to respond to spontaneous questions. Session facilitators should use all resources available before orientation to familiarize themselves with the content and potential questions of their sessions.
- Agree on a time limit for every session and stick to it. Facilitators should plan accordingly. Use a volunteer timekeeper or stop watch.
- Ensure that one volunteer is keeping an accurate list of who is coming and what they are bringing (if food is to be served).
- Type an attendance list in advance, so that only a signature is needed on site. Attendance list should include siblings, names of parents, and student. (See sample attendance list)
- Every family who has not responded **MUST** be called until a response is obtained. Document

their responses.

- Send an email reminder to all students and host families 2-4 days out, with a specific reminder as to what they are to bring along, e.g., their YFU folders, writing implements (if desired), bag lunch, snack or beverage to share, etc.
- Be sure the site is ready before the first participants are scheduled to arrive: doors unlocked, lights on, furniture arranged, heat or A/C running, signs posted, a welcoming volunteer to greet participants, registration table set up for sign-in and obtaining name tag and folders.
- Signatures are part of the orientation's official record, so every person must sign in, including volunteers.
- Upon entering, participants should also receive their folders with resource papers and materials for the sessions. Students and host families should receive separate folders. If host families receive folders at pre-arrival, they should be told to bring that folder to post-arrival to add to it, and to keep all their YFU documents. Students should be told to keep their folders intact and bring them for mid-year and re-entry.
- Folders can also have evaluation sheets in them, as many sheets as might be completed by each given family, and one sheet per student. (This is one reason why one writes names on folders, another being to know at a glance who has not yet arrived, and a third to know whose folders have been left behind.) If evaluation sheets are not included, be sure to distribute them before time for departure.
- Have all equipment prepared ahead: pencils sharpened, usable markers, flip charts, equipment running for PowerPoints, etc.
- Have agenda posted OR have agenda printed and in each folder.
- Have beverages and cups available and signs to direct participants to lavatories.

#### DURING ORIENTATION:

- Be specific in praise of participants; encourage sharing.
- Model the behaviors you expect from participants: Use of "Please," and "Thank you," taking turns, showing consideration for others, carefully listening to comments, etc.
- Follow the announced schedule as much as possible. Start on schedule to respect participants' time.
- Conclude orientations at the announced time. Be aware that some participants may have lengthy drives. Thank the families for driving their students.
- Sometimes orientations can get "out of control," i.e., participants run rough-shod over a facilitator who has not maintained control, or a facilitator who is not sufficiently prepared or is lacking in knowledge. Sometimes, one participant attempts to dominate discussion or to lead the discussion off topic. Team planning before the orientation should include a Plan B for someone to step in and take back control; the designated person must step in graciously and competently.

For other tips, see "General Presentation and Facilitation Skills."

All orientations should have an appropriate balance between structured, educational sessions and social activities planned purely for enjoyment and socializing. Students and families need the time to relax, talk, and enjoy each other's company. The following is a list of suggested activities that can be selected to round out your orientation. Choose activities most suitable for the type of orientation.

### MAKE YOUR OWN SUNDAE

Volunteers purchase ice cream and various toppings so that students can make themselves an ice cream sundae. This can be done in the evening after sessions have been completed. This provides the students with an evening snack if the orientation is an over-night.

### INTERNATIONAL FOOD

Students can be asked to bring a snack or dessert specific to their country to share with the rest of the group.

### ATHLETIC ACTIVITY

Sometimes the site and location of the orientation will allow for other activities to occur. For example the orientation location may be near nature trails, ski slopes, an ice skating rink, a swimming pool or a gymnasium. Time and adequate supervision must be scheduled.

### SPECIAL HOLIDAY PARTIES/COMMUNITY EVENTS

Orientations can be scheduled around a holiday, such as Labor Day or a special event occurring in the city, town, or area in which the students and volunteers reside. If there is a community celebration, e.g., the town's birthday, students can participate in the festivals, fairs, parades and community projects related to the local celebration. By participating in a parade, for example, the YFU program can be promoted in the community. It is necessary, however, to organize and prepare the group ahead of time.

Another community event involves contacting the mayor of the town, city, etc. to have the day of the orientation proclaimed "YFU Day in the Town of ..." The community would see the benefits of having international students among them, and the students would feel a part of the community in which they reside. It would increase the visibility of YFU and serve as a public relations vehicle to obtain host families, volunteers, and American students for the future.

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## TEAM BUILDING

Developing a sense of team among the orientation volunteers helps ensure a successful program.

The orientation team is responsible for providing an effective orientation program, meaning that:

- students are encouraged to participate and derive the most out of the orientation
- the physical and emotional safety of all participants is maintained
- the orientation runs smoothly and on schedule
- there is a cooperative learning environment
- the orientation meets CSJET and DOS standards
- proper documentation is provided to the district office

A successful orientation program requires that every team member is clear about his/her role and responsibilities. The orientation team should have a planning meeting either in person or by conference call to agree upon individual roles, the agenda, and other practical matters. In addition, team building activities at this time can help team members become acquainted with each other and encourage cooperation, communication, and awareness of individual strengths and limitations.

Many exercises planned for students can be used as team-building activities for orientation volunteers. An extensive debriefing with participants is critical to gain maximum benefit from these activities. Resources for these kinds of activities include Team Games for Trainers by Carolyn Nelson and Cooperative Sports and Games by Dr. Terry Orlick.

A debriefing following the orientation is important to show all team members that their perspectives are valued, to build individual skills, and to improve the orientation design for the future. Members can discuss what worked, what didn't work, any follow-up that may be needed, and suggestions for making future orientations better. Notes should be kept by the primary facilitator and made available to all members of the team.

The goal is for orientation volunteers to appreciate being part of a team effort to provide a meaningful event for families and students. Teams that have worked together in the past need to acknowledge that new perspectives are useful, and that newer members must feel as if they are contributing something substantial – or at least learning something – or they will not return to help with future orientations.

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## FACILITATION SKILLS

- The presenter should seek to establish an atmosphere for learning and sharing through his/her appearance, delivery style, and opening comments. Participants should feel safe, comfortable, and willing to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences. Dress appropriately as a representative of YFU.
- Establish credibility by stating briefly and to the point your YFU role and experience.
- Try to make eye contact with different participants during the session. Don't ignore parts of the audience by looking only in one direction.
- Try to use leading questions in your delivery, to avoid lecturing, and to allow students and host families to provide much of the content you wish to impart. Experienced host families and students from countries with excellent pre-departure orientations will be familiar with most things you will discuss/present.
- Include physical energizers as necessary.
- Display a high level of enthusiasm; make eye contact; use appropriate body language; use gestures; use appropriate voice quality (tone and volume). Don't forget to smile and to positively acknowledge audience participation.
- Use visual aids to enhance understanding and retention; a PowerPoint may be helpful.
- Use simple, clear text that is well organized for PowerPoints, charts, handouts. Colors (avoid yellow) increase interest, but must be easily read off a screen or flip chart.
- When speaking, use a conversational and informative tone. Never simply read from slides. Elaboration and examples help maintain interest.
- Limit the use of aside comments, unless they specifically enhance understanding by participants. Use "war stories" (experiences with past students) ONLY to illustrate important points, and keep them brief and focused. Include details only if they are relevant to your point. Use active listening and reflective listening during discussion sessions.
- Give thorough and clear directions. Consider giving directions in written form or by modeling the expected behavior. Post directions and time limits on a flip chart slide that remains visible during the activity. Confusion about directions is disruptive to the flow of the program.
- Do your best to refer to participants by name. Students feel more significant if folks remember who they are. Host families will expect that you know them. Refer to name tags as needed.
- Know your material. Thorough understanding of the material supports engaging delivery. It allows you to present material in your own words, and that makes the session more interesting and more effective. If you have mastery of your material, you are prepared to answer questions.
- Remember that you are in charge. It is your job to keep the group on task so that the session can be delivered effectively and meet the objectives. Do not allow a participant to disrupt the



session. Use techniques to neutralize the disruption or speak with him/her privately as soon as possible.

- Move around to infuse energy and make the session more engaging for participants.
- Keep the sessions and activities as interactive as possible. Encourage all participants to join the discussion and try to elicit different perspectives. Stay on task; use a variety of techniques; clarify and rephrase often if you see students who don't understand; record responses on a flip chart as appropriate.
- Seating in a circle or semi-circle is usually preferable to seating in rows.
- When students are sharing ideas, validate their contributions by repeating each one before going to the next one. Rephrase if necessary to ensure that all understand "important" comments.
- Ensure that your handouts look professional: YFU logo, appropriate font and size, without typographical errors.
- When preparing folders, place resource material (cell phone guidelines, permission to travel form, sample DS-2019, etc.) in the left pocket, and items to be used during the orientation in the right pocket. At the beginning of the orientation state that all documents in the folder are in order of use, and the facilitators will tell participants when to take them out.
- Limit the number of paper-and-pencil tasks during an orientation. Do not make the orientation setting resemble yet another classroom for students who spend the week in classrooms. This should be an enjoyable event that includes learning!
- Give a wrap-up of every session (if time permits) to ensure that participants make the necessary connections to the exchange experience. Participants should be involved in the debriefing conversation, since this helps understanding.
- Be sure to include a summary or set of "take-aways" at the conclusion of orientation.
- Enjoy and get to know your international students and their families!

Following are some tips for working with participants with limited English proficiency. These strategies are useful with most students, regardless of their level of English proficiency.

- Recognize that students may be very reluctant to speak in English, often due to lack of confidence or lack of speaking opportunities in their home country.
- Recognize that some students will have great difficulty understanding spoken English, especially if facilitators speak quickly, use slang, etc. Many students have little opportunity to hear spoken, unaccented English in their home country, even in school.
- Acknowledge that some students may have well-honed reading and writing skills in English, as a result of the methods used in their schools, but have lower proficiency in speaking and comprehension.
- To ensure maximum understanding and participation, ensure that oral directions are reinforced by written directions or examples. Avoid multi-part directions if possible.
- Use visual aids to enhance understanding and retention of content. Be creative with the use of posters, maps, charts, diagrams, but do not give participants too much to look at.
- Use easily understood vocabulary. Once a question is asked, allow for adequate processing time. Most students are translating in their heads, and this takes time. Be aware of your own slang! Sentences with double negatives are often difficult for our students to understand.
- Check for comprehension by asking participants to tell you, or show you, what they are supposed to be doing; avoid insulting students who clearly understand or embarrassing students who do not understand.
- Include both large- and small-group activities so that ALL students have the opportunity to participate in the more comfortable, small-group setting.
- Orientation volunteers can circulate among groups to help encourage understanding and participation.

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## FOLLOW UP

Before leaving the site:

Collect personal items left behind by participants.

- Collect your materials, including easels, flip chart paper, posters, signs, markers, tape, and flags. Do not forget the attendance list and evaluations. Leave the site as agreed upon: furniture in place, trash removed, lights off, thermostat reset, etc.

After returning home:

- Review completed evaluation forms, tabulate, and share results with the team during a debriefing session.
- Review attendance lists and contact those students and families who did not attend in order to make plans for a make-up orientation.
- Complete the required orientation report. Make copies of everything to keep for yourself, and send invitation, agenda, attendance list, evaluations, and report to the district office, care of the District Office Coordinator.
- Contact the SSM in writing to give information about students and/or host families who expressed worries or concerns during orientation or who seem to be having adjustment problems.
- Set a time to debrief with the orientation team. Remind them to send their expense reports.
- Send thank you notes to the orientation volunteers, the appropriate site contact (owner/manager or private home host), and make payments if required.
- If another use of the site is desired, do a follow-up visit to secure dates.
- Consider sending a thank you/follow-up email to all participants promptly. Encourage them to send questions not answered or other concerns by email or phone.
- During or after the debrief with the team, make copious notes of things the team needs to remember for the next time and designate a member to keep them with orientation materials.
- The team members responsible for all the above should be decided upon during the planning meeting held before orientation. It is especially important that all documents be sent to the DO. When this does not happen, there are serious audit issues, and it is often difficult to retrieve documents at a later date. It is the ultimate responsibility of the planning coordinator to ensure that all this happens. Use the check list.

*~ We're Expecting You ~*

*YFU Post-Arrival Orientation*

*Saturday, October 2, 2014*

*9:30 - 4PM (registration at 9AM)*

*Cambridge Public Library*

*125 Main Street*

*Cambridge, Minnesota 18952*

*for YFU Students and Host Parents*

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*Questions: Kim at 254-985-7854 or kim@gmail.com*



## Youth For Understanding Post-Arrival Orientation Sign-In Sheet

October 1, 2014  
Denver, Colorado

Participant Name	Role	Home Town	Sign-In Time	Signature
Sandra Cisna	Student			
Patrick Connors	Host Parent			
Melissa Connors	Host Parent			
Oona Altii	Student			
Paul Adeenze	Student			
Karen Carr	Host Parent			
Jacqueline Agon	Student			
Jon Ahmed	Host Parent			
Britt Ahrenson	Student			



## ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

It is the responsibility of the orientation coordinator and/or the primary facilitator to ensure that all items on the check list have been completed. All team members should have a copy of this document, but one person keeps the master list. Take a calendar to your planning meeting and write in the actual dates for completing each task.

4 - 6 WEEKS BEFORE THE ORIENTATION				
TASK	WHEN	WHO	COMPLETE?	NOTES
1. Agree on date with volunteers and staff				
2. Determine how much time is needed				
3. Visit and secure site; reserve				
4. Complete paperwork for site; provide proof of insurance, tax exempt certificate, deposit.				
5. Send save-the-date to host families and students; post on <a href="http://my.yfu.org">my.yfu.org</a> .				
6. Determine which volunteers are available				
7. Set up planning meeting with volunteers				
8. Identify roles for each team member				
9. Ensure that all potentially needed handouts are available				
3 - 4 WEEKS BEFORE THE ORIENTATION				
10. Meet with orientation team				
11. Identify primary facilitator				
12. Identify sessions				
13. Identify session facilitators				
14. Agree on an agenda				
15. Identify handouts to be used				
16. Provide session facilitators w/ resources				
17. Agree on who will type docs for printing				

18. Will PPT be used? Whose? Prepped?				
19. Agree on food and beverage				
20. Secure commitment for each role from team members, including attendance sheet prep; this checklist, etc.				
21. Agree on who will receive and record RSVPs				
22. Agree on evaluation form and who will prepare				
2 - 3 WEEKS BEFORE THE ORIENTATION				
23. Send all handouts, agenda, evaluation sheets, and resource sheets to the district office for copying – or decide who is going to do it.				
24. Obtain or create updated field/area placement chart, for attendance list				
25. Send detailed invite to all host families, students and Area Reps; tell them what to bring. Copy office staff; double check my.yfu.org to ensure that the posting is correct. All should have received a save-the-date at least 2 weeks earlier.				
1 WEEK BEFORE THE ORIENTATION				
26. Receive copies and prepare folders, w/ names on them				
27. Create attendance list – check with any family who has not RSVP'd				
28. Prepare name tags for all participants; volunteers bring their YFU name tags				
29. Verify that all team members are still on board				
30. Determine what supplies are needed & shop				



31. Don't neglect paper goods & paper towels				
32. Double check need for electronic equipment, cables, extension cords, and their availability at the site; have volunteers bring extra cords				
33. Verify with the site that all is available				
34. Who will arrive at site early?				
3 DAYS BEFORE ORIENTATION				
35. Send reminder email to all host families, students and area reps				
DAY OF ORIENTATION				
36. Greeters arrive early				
37. Set up welcome table with attendance sheet, pen, name tags, folders, and ensure that each family and IS has one.				
38. Put up signs, YFU flag, etc.				
39. Arrive early to set up all furniture, flip charts, electronic equipment, as much as is possible				
40. Be available to greet participants as they arrive				
41. Have someone keep track of time so that the primary facilitator begins the event as scheduled.				
42. Provide water/beverages for long distance travelers and maybe a snack.				
43. Ensure that someone is manning the "kitchen"				
44. Double check attendance list to be sure everyone has signed in				
45. Provide a place for completed evaluation forms				
46. Enlist folks to help with clean up				
47. Supervise clean up				

48. ONE person to takes evals and attendance list				
AFTER THE ORIENTATION				
49. Write thank you notes to site and all facilitators; pay for site if needed				
50. Consider sending thank you emails to each participant				
51. Tabulate responses from evaluations				
52. Debrief with orientation team; take notes for use during the next orientation				
53. Send evaluations, orientation reporting form, attendance list, copy of invitation, and agenda to the district office				
54. Remind all team members to submit expenses to the district office				
55. Plan B for the no-shows				

As an educational organization, YFU stresses the importance of orientations as a means to help students and families obtain the greatest level of educational benefit from their experience. Orientation is an ongoing process that begins before students depart for their host country and continues throughout and beyond the exchange experience.

### **Pre-Departure**

Regulatory Body: YFU International Basic Standards, CSJET

Requirement: All American students must receive a pre-departure orientation. YFU must conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for any student that does not attend the in-person pre-departure orientation.

### **Pre-Arrival**

Regulatory Body: YFU International Basic Standards, CSJET, U.S. Department of State

Requirement: All host families, new and returning, must receive a pre-arrival orientation. YFU must conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for all host families who do not attend an in-person pre-arrival orientation. The orientation may not take place on the same date as the host family interview.

### **Post-Arrival**

Regulatory Body: YFU International Basic Standards, CSJET, U.S. Department of State

Requirement: All international students and host families must be invited to an in-person post-arrival orientation. YFU must conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for all international students who do not attend an in-person post arrival orientation. YFU does not need to conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for host families who decline the invitation; however, YFU should send written post-arrival orientation materials.

### **Mid-Year**

Regulatory Body: YFU International Basic Standards

Requirement: All international students must be invited to an in-person mid-year orientation. YFU does not need to conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for students who decline the invitation; however, YFU should send written mid-year orientation materials to these students.

### **RE-ENTRY**

Regulatory Body: YFU International Basic Standards

Requirement: All international students must be invited to an in-person re-entry orientation. YFU does not need to conduct a webinar or one-on-one orientation for students who decline the invitation; however, YFU should send written re-entry orientation materials to these students.

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## LOOP

The YFU international community, with great input from YFU USA, developed Learning Outcomes for YFU Orientation Programs (LOOP) for the pre-departure, pre-arrival and post-arrival programs, in order to ensure that each participant's educational experience with YFU grows from the point of engagement in the home country through the exchange experience and back home again. YFU USA orientation materials are now undergoing a thorough review in order to ensure that our curriculum will meet LOOP expectations. Following are the learning outcomes agreed to by all YFU organizations.

Learning outcomes for the mid-year, re-entry, and homecoming programs for Study Abroad will be developed at a YFU Academy event to be held in 2014.

HOST FAMILY PRE-ARRIVAL	
<b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.	Host families will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the concept of culture in terms of object, behaviors, values.</li> <li>2. Be able to recognize the existence of different types of culture (national, community, family, age, etc.).</li> <li>3. Understand that students are a product of their culture.</li> <li>4. Understand that a student from a different country can be at a stage of development that is different from what is typical in host culture for a teenager the same age.</li> <li>5. Be aware that understanding cultural characteristics requires knowledge of the cultural context (e.g. History, values, safety issues, religion etc.).</li> <li>6. Be aware that they have expectations and that those are culturally influenced.</li> </ol>
<b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of their own cultural background (values, behaviors, objects/artefacts).</li> <li>2. Be aware what their own family culture is (e.g. implicit, unwritten rules).</li> <li>3. Understand how their own culture influences their expectations about a student and hosting experience and how it might be in conflict with the YFU program objectives.</li> </ol>
<b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the differences between cultures.</li> <li>2. Be aware of their own expectations in wanting to host a student from a particular country.</li> <li>3. Be aware of the areas of culture that will most likely be different.</li> <li>4. Understand elements of the everyday life behaviors in the student's national culture.</li> </ol>
<b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know how hosting will impact their family relations, routines and daily life.</li> <li>2. Know how to overcome communication challenges.</li> <li>3. Understand that adaptation occurs with both parties: host family and the student.</li> <li>4. Understand that both negotiating and compromising is necessary for a successful exchange experience.</li> </ol>
<b>YFU GENERAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the history and structure of YFU as an educational exchange organization</li> <li>2. Understand the educational aims of YFU</li> <li>3. Understand the expectations YFU has of exchange students</li> <li>4. Understand the expectations YFU has of them as host families</li> </ol>
<b>YFU SUPPORT</b> Communication and Support Structure in YFU	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how to access the communication channels to their AR, Field staff and national office</li> <li>2. Understand the YFU support system for them and their exchange student</li> <li>3. Understand what to do in case of emergencies –emergency phone, emergency procedures for natural disasters and other emergencies</li> </ol>
<b>STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL BEING</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Understand YFU guidelines for student's safe use of social media, internet and cell phones</li> <li>5. Understand the nature of sexual harassment, physical abuse and bullying including cyber bullying</li> <li>6. Understand YFU procedures and their responsibilities where students disclose incidents of sexual harassment, abuse or bullying</li> <li>7. Be aware of YFU's legal responsibilities to notify authorities of such incidents (where required by law)</li> </ol>
<b>YFU RULES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the YFU rules and student policies particularly related to student travel, communication with and visits from natural parents and friends, dangerous activities use of alcohol, drugs and smoking</li> </ol>
<b>YFU ADMIN</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of school enrolment procedures and their role in assisting with student enrolment</li> <li>2. Be aware of their role in making the student welcome, how to explain host family "unwritten" rules and how to communicate with students at the beginning of exchange</li> </ol>
<b>YFU COMMUNITY</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of local volunteers, national office staff and other alumni who can assist them and their student</li> </ol>

HOST FAMILY POST-ARRIVAL	
<p><b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.</p>	<p>Host families will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to recall the definition of culture worked on during PDO.</li> <li>2. Understand that cultures differ in many aspects (communication patterns, personal distance, individualism vs. collectivism, etc.).</li> </ol>
<p><b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have realized how their family culture has been challenged after the student's arrival (assume that post-arrival orientation happens about 1-1.5 months after the arrival).</li> </ol>
<p><b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to observe cultural differences and be aware of the judgments they make.</li> <li>2. Understand the cultural explanation for the observed behaviors (e.g. different senses of time).</li> <li>3. Understand elements of the everyday life behaviors in the student's family culture.</li> </ol>
<p><b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand where the host family and student are in the adjustment process (on the adjustment curve).</li> <li>2. Be able to identify communication challenges.</li> <li>3. Be able to demonstrate skills to overcome communication challenges.</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU GENERAL</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know who their AR is and who else to contact in their regional area or at National Office if they need information of support</li> <li>2. Understand the roles of ARs, national office staff and how to contact them</li> <li>3. Understand communication processes with natural parents and with their YFU organization</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU SUPPORT</b> Communication and Support Structure in YFU</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the processes involved in supporting students and host families, particularly accessing counseling support and use of "round table" mediation processes</li> <li>2. Understand the basis for YFU decisions to move a student</li> </ol>
<p><b>STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL BEING</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to explain to students how to keep themselves safe and secure in their particular community or location</li> <li>2. Be able to identify actions they need to take to help their student safe and secure in their community</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU RULES</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to identify when they need to ensure travel permissions are required for student travel</li> <li>2. Understand YFU procedures for the issuance of warning and probation letters to students when rules and procedures are not followed by students</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU ADMIN</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of student return dates and travel arrangements for the student's return</li> <li>2. Understand procedures for the voluntary or involuntary return of students</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU COMMUNITY</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of their role in helping the student to integrate into their family to become part of their family</li> </ol>

STUDENT PRE-ARRIVAL	
<p><b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the concept of culture in terms of objects, behaviors &amp; values</li> <li>2. Be aware of the influence of culture on people</li> <li>3. Understand in which aspects cultures may differ (communication patterns, personal distance, individualism vs. collectivism, etc.)</li> <li>4. Be aware that they are part of different cultural circles ranging from larger (e.g. national) to smaller (personal) level</li> <li>5. Understand that cultural references are relative</li> <li>6. Be aware that understanding cultural characteristics requires knowledge of the cultural context (e.g. History, values, safety issues, religion etc.)</li> <li>7. Be familiar with one cultural framework (e.g. Hall's culture model/ Hofstede's dimensions, etc.) that will help them to recognize the differences and compare cultures</li> </ol>
<p><b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of their own cultural background (values, behaviors, objects that are part of it).</li> <li>2. Be aware that they have expectations and those are culturally influenced.</li> <li>3. Be aware of the way they might be perceived by others / prejudice and stereotypes.</li> <li>4. Understand their motivation(s) for going on exchange.</li> <li>5. To consider: Defining cultural background; Be aware of one's Cultural Identity</li> </ol>
<p><b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand their expectations of living in the other culture.</li> <li>2. Understand their own stereotypes of the culture they are going to.</li> <li>3. Be curious in term of the other culture and be able to ask questions about it.</li> <li>4. Be aware that they will have to take on challenges (be comfortable about the exchange experience not always being comfortable).</li> <li>5. Understand how to explore differences between cultures.</li> </ol>
<p><b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to uncover one's own expectations and fears. (The first step to adaptation is realizing the need to adapt.)</li> <li>2. Be able to recognize culture shock.</li> <li>3. Understand that differences cannot be judged in terms of right or wrong. It's just different.</li> <li>4. Be aware of his/her limits to adaptation.</li> <li>5. Understand that social media and the internet present both good opportunities and challenges to having a good exchange year.</li> <li>6. Understand the challenges of intercultural communication in terms of language, different communication styles, different cultural perspectives.</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU GENERAL</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the history and structure of YFU as an educational organization and its educational aims</li> <li>2. Understand the expectations YFU has for them as exchange students</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU SUPPORT</b> Communication and Support Structure in YFU</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand that there is a structure to support them in every YFU country</li> <li>2. Understand who and how they should contact when needed</li> </ol>
<p><b>STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL BEING</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the nature of harassment, abuse or bullying</li> <li>2. Be aware of procedures to be followed to ensure the safe use of social media, internet chat rooms and use of text messages on mobile phones</li> <li>3. Be able to identify challenges that could affect their safety and well being</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU RULES</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the YFU student policies, particularly related to communication with home country and the need to obey local laws in the host country</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU ADMIN</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know how to make a claim on their insurance if needed</li> <li>2. Be aware of how to manage money while on exchange</li> <li>3. Be aware of arrangements for travel to and from their host country</li> </ol>

	STUDENT POST-ARRIVAL
<b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.	Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to recall the definition of culture worked on PDO.</li> <li>2. Be able to recognize that exchange students create an “exchange student culture” among themselves.</li> <li>3. Know the cultural framework the host YFU organization uses in order to apply it to their own experience.</li> </ol>
<b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware that they will perceive host culture through their cultural background.</li> <li>2. Be aware that adjusting to host culture means they will not always be able to live by the standards of their own culture.</li> <li>3. Be able to deal with the critique of their own culture.</li> </ol>
<b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of norms of everyday life in their host country culture.</li> <li>2. Be aware of critical structures of society (e.g. school system, political system, family life etc.) for the specific host country.</li> <li>3. Know about the structure of the year (e.g. vacations in relation to school, holidays).</li> <li>4. Understand that there is no ultimate answer to the questions about the other culture.</li> <li>5. Have a deeper understanding of the differences between my culture and the other culture.</li> <li>6. Have improved questioning skills on the differences between my culture and the other culture.</li> </ol>
<b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to accept traits of the other culture, such as host family rules, national laws, school requirements.</li> <li>2. Be able to demonstrate a knowledge of the topics taught in the pre-departure orientation, such as fears and expectations, culture shock, intercultural communication, social media/internet.</li> <li>3. Be able to react to symptoms of culture shock and/or homesickness by applying the necessary adjustment tools</li> </ol>
<b>YFU GENERAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the requirements for school attendance in their host country</li> <li>2. Know the procedures for travel within or beyond their host country and how to seek permission from YFU for travel</li> <li>3. Be aware of the structure of school year including vacations, as well as of optional YFU trips and required orientations</li> </ol>
<b>YFU SUPPORT</b> Communication and Support Structure in YFU	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know how the support system works in their host country and how to access that support when needed</li> <li>2. Know who to contact and what will happen in case of emergency</li> <li>3. Know who their AR is, how to contact them for support</li> </ol>
<b>STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL BEING</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how to report abuse or harassment (to YFU and to authorities if needed) in their host country</li> <li>2. Understand the laws/ procedures of their host country, host schools and YFU in relation to use of social media, internet and mobile phones</li> <li>3. Develop skills to help them resist peer or adult pressures to engage in situations that endanger their safety and well being</li> </ol>
<b>YFU RULES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the laws, cultural attitudes and visa conditions of the host country as they relate to school attendance, consumption of alcohol and drugs, smoking and other legal issues</li> <li>2. Be aware of any legal issues related to use of internet or mobile phones</li> </ol>
<b>YFU ADMIN</b>	Students will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware how YFU in their host country can assist them to make a claim on their insurance if needed</li> <li>2. Know how to complete the visa approval process if required in their particular host country</li> </ol>



	NATURAL PARENT PRE-ARRIVAL
<b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.	Natural parents will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the concept of culture in terms of object, behaviors, values.</li> <li>2. Know one cultural framework (e.g. Hall's culture model/ Hofstede's dimensions, etc.) that will help them to recognize the differences and compare cultures.</li> <li>3. Understand how learning (personal and cultural) occurs through an exchange program.</li> </ol>
<b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of their own cultural background (values, behaviors, objects/artifacts).</li> <li>2. Have realized what their own family culture is (e.g. implicit rules).</li> <li>3. Be aware that their own culture influences their expectations towards the exchange experience.</li> </ol>
<b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gain understanding of key elements (e.g. structure of the family, practical information, school system) of the other culture.</li> <li>2. Gain understanding of what it is like to be a host family.</li> </ol>
<b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know of student's adjustment curve/cycle (utilizing the YFU adjustment curve model).</li> <li>2. Be able to identify signs and symptoms of the culture chock.</li> <li>3. Understand how the communication between student and National Parents affect student's adaptation in Host Country and Host Family.</li> <li>4. Be committed to let go of day-to-day parental responsibilities and rely on YFU and the host family for the best interest of their son/daughter.</li> <li>5. Understand that the natural family dynamic will change with the absence of their son/daughter.</li> </ol>
<b>YFU GENERAL</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of YFU's history, mission and philosophy as an educational exchange organization</li> <li>2. Be aware that exchange is experiential learning for students and natural and host families</li> <li>3. Understand the expectations YFU has of them as Natural Parents and of their student child as an exchange student</li> </ol>
<b>YFU SUPPORT</b> Communication and Support Structure in YFU	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the YFU worldwide structure to support students in their adjustment to a new cultural context and their host family</li> <li>2. Understand the communication channels in the sending organization for them as Natural Parents</li> <li>3. Understand YFU procedures for problem solving for students on exchange</li> <li>4. Understand how to communicate the YFU volunteers and national office staff for information, advice or support during their child's exchange</li> </ol>
<b>STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL BEING</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand YFU guidelines for student's safe use of social media, internet and cell phones</li> <li>2. Understand the nature of sexual harassment, physical abuse and bullying including cyber bullying</li> <li>3. Understand YFU procedures where students disclose incidents of sexual harassment ,abuse or bullying</li> </ol>
<b>YFU RULES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand the Worldwide procedures and student policies particularly as they relate to student travel, communication with their student child and host family and visits to their child during the exchange program</li> <li>1. Be aware of the YFU procedures for problem solving for their child while on exchange</li> <li>1. Understand the procedures for issuance of warning and probation letters if required and for ER or IER if required</li> </ol>
<b>YFU ADMIN</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware the content of the YFU travel and medical insurance policy and procedures for making an insurance claim</li> <li>2. Be aware of YFU's travel procedures to support and assist students at departure , in transit and on arrival</li> <li>3. Understand the visa application process and the documentation required from them and from YFU</li> </ol>
<b>YFU COMMUNITY</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be aware of the value of hosting</li> <li>1. Be able to contact other YFU families and volunteers for support during their child's exchange</li> </ol>

NATURAL PARENT POST-ARRIVAL	
<p><b>CULTURE</b> Defining and Understanding the concept of culture.</p>	<p>Natural parents will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to recall the definition of culture worked on at PDO.</li> </ol>
<p><b>MY CULTURE</b> Understanding my culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have realized how their family culture has changed after the child is gone.</li> </ol>
<p><b>THE OTHER CULTURE</b> Understanding a different culture and how that culture encompasses and influences lifestyles, behaviors, values and worldviews.</p>	<p>No orientation needed, but they can be provided with different opportunities of reflecting on the exchange experience as parents.</p>
<p><b>ADAPTATION</b> Developing the necessary abilities and tools to reconcile the differences between two cultures.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand how their own behavior may affect their son's/daughter's exchange experience.</li> <li>2. Be aware that they are also learning from the exchange year of their son/daughter.</li> </ol>
<p><b>YFU GENERAL</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be able to identify the strengths and weakness of the sending organizations pre-departure orientations, logistics and procedures either in parent meetings or by natural parent surveys</li> </ol>

Students shall be given a suitable orientation before departure and after arrival in the host country, including information on how to identify and report cases of suspected student abuse.

For programs that include a homestay, the organization shall provide suitable orientation and training to the host family. (When a family expresses an interest in hosting a student and a representative makes the initial home visit to explain the program, this is not to be considered the "host family orientation." CSJET suggests that host family orientation include information on the student's expectations about family and school life, customs, religion, and mores of the student's native country, the academic program in which the student will be enrolled, potential problems in hosting exchange students, and suggestions on how to cope with such problems.)

## INTERNATIONAL BASIC STANDARDS

As an educational organization, YFU emphasizes orientation programs for all participants, so that they may reach an optimal level of educational benefits both for their own growth and as a contribution to international and intercultural understanding, cooperation, and respect for diversity and peace from their program participation. Orientation in this sense is an ongoing process that begins before the student's departure for their host country and continues throughout and beyond their exchange experience.

### Pre-Departure Orientation

Each student participates in a comprehensive orientation program. This takes place substantially prior to the student's actual departure to her/his host country. It addresses a variety of goals that are necessary objectives of a responsible preparation for the exchange experience. These goals include:

- a) awareness of the YFU program as a learning opportunity and a learning process about cultural identities and cultural differences;
- b) awareness of the exchange student's necessary adjustment to the culture of their host country not only as a prerequisite for a satisfying living experience in the foreign personal environment, but also as a learning process in intercultural communication and cooperation;
- c) application of their new intercultural insights and skills and the respect for cultural diversity to the exchange experience itself and beyond to issues and activities in inter-group, intercultural and international relations;
- d) reflection by the students on their identity and role as members of their own culture, with its own distinctive history, structure, values and behavioral norms and patterns, none of which can be assumed to be universal;
- e) understanding of the need to develop increased personal communication skills, including a strong emphasis on developing proficiency in the language of the host country, both prior to

departure and in whichever language training program may be offered through YFU in the host country upon arrival;

- f) specific preparation for characteristic elements of the student's expected personal foreign environment, such as information on the school system, family and community life, and peer-group relationships characteristic of the specific host country; and detailed and accurate preparation of the student for specific administrative features and other conditions of participation in the YFU program, such as visa requirements, travel procedures, clothing and personal hygiene requirements, YFU behavioral rules, procedures and organizational structure in the host country, as well as the history and purpose of YFU.

Attendance at this orientation program is mandatory. If such programs include students selected to go to a variety of different host countries, some of the information required under f. and g. above may be provided in more detail in post-arrival orientation programs in the respective host countries (see 2. below).

In conjunction with pertinent and sophisticated written materials, which address the specific orientation goals and issues mentioned above and with which students should be furnished prior to arrival on the orientation site, such orientation programs must include at least one full day of group sessions at an appropriate training site. Longer on-site orientation programs are encouraged in order to optimize the educational effect. Orienters must be YFU volunteers or staff members with cross-cultural experience who are committed to the educational goals and adhere to the standards and principles of the YFU organization. These persons must have specific experience in this function and/or specific training for it. They are responsible to the YFU National Organization. In order to enhance student's receptiveness and active participation, as well as to take into account different learning styles, a diversity of teaching methods is employed.

Responsibility for the implementation of this section of YFU orientation programs rests with the YFU organization in the sending country. In preparing contents, tools, and materials, coordination with and verification by receiving countries is essential.

Welcome letters to students will be issued by YFU organizations in receiving countries as soon as possible after student files have been submitted to them. They will be shared with the YFU National Organizations in the sending countries. They will not be restricted to, but include, as a minimum, information on the school system, travel and arrival arrangements, customs, climate, clothing and pocket money.

### **Post-Arrival Orientation**

Each student is actively involved in a second orientation program immediately or within a two-month time limit after arriving in the host country. This post-arrival orientation addresses the topic areas described above under from the perspective of the host country, its culture, and its YFU organization. It is not necessarily limited to those topics, but also addresses, e.g., such specific adjustment problems as may already have arisen. It may, where appropriate, be coupled with an intensive language training program in the language of the host country.

Regarding length of program, location, personnel, and diversity of methods, the same standards apply which were described under 1.

Responsibility for this section of the YFU orientation program rests with the YFU organization in

the receiving country, notwithstanding the need to coordinate content and materials with the YFU organization in the sending country.

### **Mid-Term Orientation**

Additional orientation is provided in the host country at least once during the student's stay ("mid-term orientation"). This does not require large-scale student reunions, but can also be accomplished very economically by thoughtful volunteers and other resource persons at a relatively local level. The program is designed to enhance the student's awareness of the educational process they are undergoing as YFU students as a dynamic process reaching beyond the end of the actual exchange experience. Intercultural learning features described above under I. a. to c. are reinforced. Student adjustment experiences are monitored and examined as preconditions for life in the foreign environment as well as for their learning potential regarding intercultural communication and cooperation. Through appropriate topics, a more comprehensive look at the history, structure, institutions, and values of the host culture is encouraged.

### **Re-Entry Orientation**

Re-entry orientation preceding students' return to their home countries is offered either on an appropriate orientation site or, as a minimum, through adequate written materials. Re-entry orientation addresses the psychological pressures involved in readjusting to one's home culture. It also emphasizes the opportunities and the need for ongoing intercultural educational activities. In both respects, it prepares students and stimulates expectations for their participation in homecoming orientation programs and ongoing international educational activities within or outside YFU (cf. also Section VI A. 2 re: natural parents).

### **Host Family Orientation Requirements**

Host family orientation takes place through personal interviews, written materials, and/or group sessions substantially prior to student arrivals. It addresses the topic areas described above under A.1.a. to c. and g., as well as specific information about differences in student cultural backgrounds inasmuch as such differences are likely to affect family and school integration, behavioral patterns, and peer-group relationships of students. Face-to-face orientation must be conducted by orienters who are YFU volunteers or staff members with cross-cultural experience who are committed to the educational goals and adhere to the standards and principles of the YFU organization. These persons must have specific experience in this function and/or specific training for it. They are responsible to the YFU National Organization.

In addition, involvement of host family members in content-related YFU activities throughout the student's stay in the receiving country is strongly recommended and encouraged.



OFFICE OF PRIVATE SECTOR EXCHANGE  
BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPONENTS INTO THE  
EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM

### WHY DOES AN EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM NEED A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPONENT?

The Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) brings true global value to American public diplomacy. People-to-people programs provide unlimited opportunity for exchange visitors and Americans to engage with each other, to inform exchange visitors' thinking about the United States and its place in the global community, to break down prejudices and misunderstandings, and in the long-term expand and strengthen the relationships between Americans and the rest of the world.

In accordance with the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961, these cultural, educational and professional exchanges are intended to build mutual understanding – and help create a foundation of trust between Americans and the rest of the world. By bringing people together to share perspectives and experiences, they strengthen our national security and promote prosperity – at home and abroad.

Each EVP category offers participants a unique opportunity to experience the U.S. and its diversity and to connect directly with Americans. The cross-cultural component of the EVP experience is critical to the short-term success of each individual exchange, and to the long-term effectiveness of the Program and of U.S. public diplomacy overall.

Through an Exchange Visitor Program sponsor designation, you are entrusted to implement a cultural exchange program, in collaboration with host organizations, other partners and the participants, themselves. Success in advancing U.S. public diplomacy goals, as all programs in the EVP are intended to do, is best achieved through careful planning and execution of the cultural component of the exchange.

### WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPONENT?

The cross-cultural component of the exchange visitor program gives participants the opportunity to learn about U.S. society and culture outside of their placement; to share their own culture, traditions and views with Americans; to help see the world from another perspective; to be more tolerant and respectful of differences; and to appreciate similarities that bring people together. These are the goals of people-to-people exchange and are the central reasons the Exchange Visitor Program exists.