

MEDIA CONTACT:
Nathalie Herrera
MMGY Global
nherrera@mmgyglobal.com
(646) 442-6762

TOMORROW'S LEADERS NEED TO TRAVEL THE WORLD TODAY

*The Student & Youth Travel Digest Quantifies Impact of Student Travel on
Leadership Skills, Learning and Job Readiness*

WASHINGTON D.C., June 20, 2016 – Volatile world conditions dictate that our future leaders must have an understanding of diverse cultures, know how to think independently, and exhibit tolerance. A new study for SYTA shows that more than 75% of U.S. teachers believe that when students travel, there is a positive impact on these aspects of a student's personal development, and more than half believe it has a positive impact on their education and career.

The Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA) is releasing the findings today of a landmark global study that gauges the impact of travel on students and the travel industry. The Student & Youth Travel Digest sheds light on the tremendous educational opportunity that exists to enhance learning in young people while creating economic opportunities for cities, attractions and small businesses. SYTA is committed to helping parents and teachers enable more young people to travel and to provide the safest and most educational experience possible.

"It has never been more critical to afford young people the opportunity to develop the skills, independence and curiosity that shape great leaders," said Carylann Assante, Executive Director, SYTA. "Today, we have solid data that shows that travel enhances the learning experience and produces better students. We aim to be a connector and a resource for parents, educators and the travel industry so all students can have access to these transformative experiences outside the classroom."

Study Represents Over 1 Million Students Worldwide

SYTA partnered with StudentMarketing, an independent market specialist in international student travel and a UNWTO Affiliate Member, to conduct a two-year study on the full spectrum of student travel. The study draws from a survey conducted from August 2013 to November 2015. The study gathered insights from 1,432 U.S. teachers, 128 U.S. student group leaders, 146 U.S. tour operators, and 437 international tour operators. Collectively, this group represents the patterns and preferences of over 1 million students who have traveled within the U.S. and overseas.

The study explores the full scope of the student travel experience, probing topics such as top domestic and international destinations, the most popular themes for trips, average spend per trip, as well challenges faced by teachers and trip leaders in organizing these experiences.

Student Travel Transforms Lives and Fuels Economic Growth

The study found that for every 1,000 U.S. students, \$775,000 is being spent on student travel. These trips are mostly led by teachers and volunteer group leaders.

Teachers report significant improvement in their students' information retention and social skills following student travel. Some of the specific improvements they cite about their students include the following as a result of domestic and international travel:

Impact of Domestic Student Travel

- 54% report students' increased willingness to know/learn/explore
- 52% report increased desire to travel
- 50% report increased independence, self-esteem and confidence
- 48% report more intellectual curiosity
- 42% report better cooperation/collaboration
- 41% report better adaptability and sensitivity
- 41% report increased tolerance of other cultures and ethnicities
- 39% report increased tolerance and respectfulness
- 37% report better self-expression
- 35% report higher activity in class
- 35% report increased desire to attend college

Impact of International Student Travel

- 76% report desire to travel more
- 74% report increased tolerance of other cultures and ethnicities
- 73% report students' increased willingness to know/learn/explore
- 70% report increased in willingness to try different foods
- 69% report increased independence, self-esteem and confidence
- 69% report more intellectual curiosity
- 66% report increased tolerance and respectfulness
- 66% report better adaptability and sensitivity
- 51% report being more outgoing
- 51% report better self-expression
- 42% report increased attractiveness to college admissions

Student travel fulfills the roles of providing practical learning about other cultures and the majority of teachers (79%) organize student trips because they want their students to become more culturally aware.

Top Domestic and International Destinations for U.S. Student Travel

U.S. student groups visit an average of two destinations when traveling domestically; these trips last for an average of four days. Student groups traveling overseas visit an average of three destinations per trip; these trips last for an average of 10 days.

The most popular U.S. destinations for student trips (according to teachers/group leads):

1. Washington, D.C.
2. New York, NY
3. Orlando, FL
4. Boston, MA
5. Chicago, IL

The most popular international destinations for student trips (according to teachers/group leads):

1. France
2. Spain
3. Italy
4. Costa Rica
5. U.K.

The preferred program types for U.S. student group travel are:

- Music (72%)
- History (50%)
- Art & Culture (44%)
- Science (34%)
- Natural History (33%)
- Biology (17%)
- Business (17%)
- Geography (17%)
- Ecology (16%)
- Language & Literature (16%)

We Can – And Must – Help Students Go Further

Teachers face several challenges in planning student travel, including:

- 86% cite financial resources as a hurdle
- 29% cite administrative rules or limitations
- 24% cite risk management

Further, 25% of student trips are covered by fundraising, highlighting the need for scholarship programs to make travel accessible to more young people.

“We applaud the work of teachers and volunteers who go above and beyond to expose young people to the world,” said Assante. “And yet there is more that we can all do. We have to place a greater premium on the invaluable life lessons

gleaned from travel and we should create opportunities for every student to have these experiences. We invite teachers, parents and the travel industry to join SYTA and the SYTA Foundation in our efforts to foster learning through exploration.”

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About The Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA)

SYTA is the non-profit, professional trade association that promotes student & youth travel and seeks to foster integrity and professionalism among student and youth travel service providers. SYTA is "The Voice of Student and Youth Travel.®" Our members understand that travel is a key part of a complete education, and are committed to providing student and youth travelers with safe, rich, and rewarding experiences. For more information visit www.syta.org.

About the SYTA Youth Foundation

The SYTA Youth Foundation is the 501(c)(3) philanthropic sister organization of the Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA). The purpose of the Foundation is to create ongoing awareness and assistance programs for the direct benefit of youth. The SYTA Youth Foundation acts as a vehicle for the many volunteer resources and funding capabilities available from SYTA members, the Student & Youth Travel Industry, the Educational Community, and the Public. For more information, visit sytayouthfoundation.org