



World Affairs Council OF NEW HAMPSHIRE



How Did We Get Here, and Where are We Going?

On March 12th, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). The flagship exchange program of the U.S. Department of State had to shut down in-person travel, send visitors home, and re-imagine how this vital work could continue. After long, hard consultations, this resilient network decided that its efforts were too important to be derailed by the ongoing health crisis. In the face of many challenges, the IVLP has come through this tumultuous time stronger and more robust than ever.

Reflecting back on the shock of having to send visitors home before the completion of their programs, it is amazing what this network has accomplished in such a short amount of time. After a brief pause in exchanges, the IVLP resumed building global bridges in the second half of 2020, through a shift to a fully virtual model. Though not without its own challenges, these online exchanges provided visitors and hosts with amazing tools to allow for new cross-cultural engagements. By leveraging the latest in online technology, countless hours of training, and a can-do attitude, the Global Ties US network has proven its resilience.

Early in the pandemic, many thought this pause in programs would last only a couple of months. While this proved misguided, the network has had time to adjust to the new normal and innovate in ways never thought possible. From joint meetings across the country to video tours of art galleries, new ways to engage have expanded exponentially. In 2021, the IVLP network creatively crafted professional exchanges for 4,488 international visitors from 177 different countries. These exchange participants were able to meet with thousands of people from 93 communities here in the U.S., creating new linkages that benefit both sides. This compares favorably to previous years, where the IVLP typically hosted around 5,000 international visitors annually.

Of course, the world wants to know when this program, and everything else, can get back to face to face engagements. While some initial steps were taken prior to the delta and omicron variants, the network knows that the health and safety of the visitors and communities takes priority. However, there is hope on the horizon, with a return to in-person exchanges already underway. The State Department will continue to monitor the situation, but barring a new surge, WACNH will welcome participants into the community in the coming months. It certainly is an exciting time for all.

In this issue:

Embracing the virtual space - 2
Silver linings, reflecting back - 2
College student finds value in IVLP - 2

Making IVLP Memories - 3
The Faces of Exchange - 3

2020 IVLP alumni spotlight - 4

2021 IVLP project spotlight - 5

NH resources strengthen IVLP - 6

Re-imagining home hospitality - 7

From the Director's Desk

Since March 2020, our worlds have been turned upside down and what was our normal is only a distant memory. I think back to those days and realize we are a resilient network. We have all been pushed to our limits, but we still move forward. Citizen diplomacy is essential to the fabric of our being. We must connect, help, and grow together, which I am reminded of every day!

I wanted to give a special thank you to each one of you who has helped WACNH's IVLP exchanges reach into the virtual world. While I know there is a huge difference between in-person and virtual, the fact you still believe in our mission is more gratifying than words can express.

As we greet 2022, I hope you join us in crafting engaging opportunities for visitors, whether in-person or virtual.

Anise Jasman-Sayers
International Visitor
Program Director



Embracing Virtual Programming and Learning Something New! NO Fear:

In August of 2020, WACNH hosted one of the first virtual IVLP exchanges throughout the network. Leveraging new technology and techniques, the visitors saw the power of these programs firsthand. While overcoming the jitters of the day, the Council took away many great lessons from the early adoption of this technology. New opportunities arose as staff took a more active role in facilitating conversations than what was necessary for in-person meetings. After the first program, WACNH quickly realized that Zoom technology (breakout rooms, interpretation, etc.) allowed for deeply engaging discussions and took pride in rising to the occasion. Moving forward WACNH will continue to refine these programs.

Silver Linings, Reflecting Back

Looking back on the many IVLP challenges over the past year, the network recognizes the most significant change all IVLP programmers have experienced these past couple years is how programs are created and run. This mainly shows up in the different ways that meetings are held and how that affects conversations. While in-person discussions follow a more natural flow, online meetings can feel more stunted. In addition, when people meet face to face, the opportunities for connections become readily apparent. The biggest challenge was to find ways to facilitate these same relationships with virtual meetings. As anyone who has experienced an online meeting where you do not know everyone can attest, the initial conversations can be difficult to start. In addition, visitors have many more distractions in this online format; be it connection issues, work demands, or busy family lives. With so many obstacles, the network needed to learn how to manage these distractions.

After many workshops and peer lead opportunities, staff learned ways to read and understand different kinds of body language, honed their active listening skills, strengthened their facilitation skills and became strong moderators. These new abilities helped program staff play a more active role in creating an inclusive environment where visitors and resources felt comfortable enough to participate and ask the important questions necessary to learn from one another.

Now that the role of a programmer has been remade in the virtual world, the question to ask is how can these new skills benefit future in-person programs to make them even stronger than before?

College Student Finds Value in IVLP



2021 Education in The Digital Age

I was first introduced to the IVLP program as a student volunteer speaking with educators from around the world about education in the digital age after Covid 19. I learned that when the world went remote, students were missing the ability to learn because of the lack of stable internet. Being able to experience IVLP from a student's perspective made me realize how privileged I was, and how the virus has really impacted people across the globe.

IVLP enables the collaboration of experts in several areas around the world on a broad range of topics. Each of these conversations lead to an individual feeling more knowledgeable and well-rounded on the topic at hand. I learned that everyone has different experiences and stories to share. By learning through developmental meetings like the IVLP, every person becomes a student. These conversations and fresh perspectives enable our world to change in a way that works for everyone.

Kaitlyn Acciardo (she/her) -IVLP Resource & Intern





Did you know, 172 different countries have visited NH through IVLP

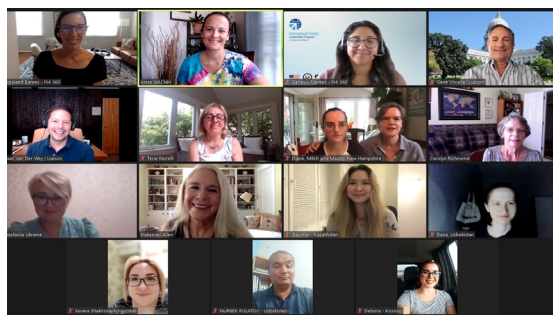
Making IVLP Memories During the Pandemic

A few highlights from the past year

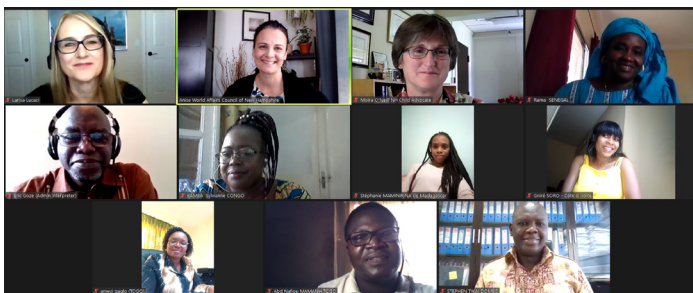
In August 2021, WACNH welcomed the "Transparency and Accountability" group, a multi-regional project with 13 visitors from around the globe. As part of the NH program, the Council produced a round-table discussion with a number of NH state legislators to share best practices in keeping governments transparent in their work. While these meetings are routinely held in the state, visitors are always impressed by the dedication and commitment these elected officials show. With a country so divided politically, this meeting allowed both parties the opportunity to have an open conversation about how legislators can work together to achieve common goals, despite deep differences. These meetings are vitally important to help visitors understand best practices in creating consensus to best serve constituents, as well as moving the country, province, state, or town forward.

Versatility is extremely important in programming, whether it's the type of meeting or the day and time of it. No matter the challenge, it is vital that programmers work to overcome the issues and create solutions to ensure valuable experiences. Last summer, this kind of flexibility was needed for a home hospitality social hour scheduled for a Saturday. As the day approached, WACNH's IVLP programmer found the opportunity to show visitors from Armenia, Czech Republic, Lebanon, and Libya a truly American experience while using virtual tools. As she had an upcoming camping trip scheduled for the same time, she brought the visitors along, via her laptop. By showing off her campsite, she opened conversations into the love of the outdoors and camping that many Americans share. This was a truly unique experience for this group that they would not have had on a traditional IVLP trip.

The Faces of Exchange



21st Century Change Makers Trend Leaders Promote Social Media Discernment among Youth group meets with NH residents for a social hour



Promoting Transparent and Ethical Inter-country Adoption group meets with Office of the Child Advocate



Youth and Civic Engagement group meets with NH Youth Advisory Council

2020 IVLP Alumni Spotlight

Over the years WACNH has remained in contact with many of the visitors who came to the state. It is amazing to see the wonderful things these people continue to achieve after their IVLP experience and to hear about how their visit to NH changed their lives. Without a doubt, this program transforms everyone who engages with it. This year we decided to highlight one IVLP Alumni who benefited greatly from his experience and has made a profound impact exchange on those around him. He comes from the 2020 Political Engagement in the Digital Age project.

His name is Mr. Fanny Syariful Alam, the co-founder and Regional Coordinator of the Indonesian School of Peace. He was chosen to participate on this project because of his work in empowering local youth to address human rights-based peace issues, along with his desire to create a healthy and equitable democratic environment for young people to learn from and understand each other. His work has had an impact on the participation and awareness of youth and minority groups around religion, gender, politics, and sexuality. He reflects back on his IVLP journey by writing "Engaging young people in political activities prepares them to be good civilians, opens their minds and helps them to understand their rights and defend the civil rights of others." Since his IVLP journey, he has stayed engaged in the alumni network and his writings have been featured in Global Ties U.S. outreach. He was even selected to participate in the 2021 Australia Awards project on youth political resilience in Indonesia's democracy. He writes "This award, like the IVLP, is another step toward improving youth civic engagement and an opportunity to advance youth empowerment and democracy in Indonesia." His work to encourage youth participation in democracy is not over yet.



Visitor Reflections



"I participated in the IVLP program in January 2020 on youth political engagement in the digital age. In the U.S., we met with several youth organizations, but my visit to NH was a highlight. We had opportunities to speak with young legislators, Republican Joe Alexander and Democrat Cam Kenney. We learned about the issues that drove them to politics, such as budgetary transparency, climate change, student loan debt, and the environment, particularly the consequences of environmental destruction for the New Hampshire public and future generations. We also met with a group of young female students who are members of the New Hampshire Youth Legislative Council, who work with legislators to bring youth voices to the state house. One of my most memorable moments was when we did a volunteer community service at the local soup kitchen, where we served more than 250 meals to the homeless that night.

The IVLP has changed my life forever, besides the many opportunities it has presented to excel, my voice in my own community has gotten stronger, the public listens to me more seriously when I talked about human issues."

*Mr. Fanny Syariful ALAM, Founder and Regional
Program Director, School of Peace
Indonesia Bandung*



2020 In-Person numbers, 4 groups, 25 meetings, 139 visitors engaged with 53 NH residents

2020 Virtual numbers, 7 groups, 15 meetings, 200 visitors engaged with 34 NH residents

2021 IVLP Project Spotlight

Education in the Digital Age



Education in the Digital Age group meets with NH residents for a social hour

Back in 2021, the Council hosted an amazing group of visitors from across the world on a project that focused on how virtual tools can help educate students in the new digital age. Due to this program happening in a virtual space, WACNH had a chance to test out a new form of programming where the visitors had a joint meeting with students from around the country all at once. In the past, meetings could only be held in one city at a time, limiting the perspectives that could be shared. Through a partnership with Global Ties Miami, the visitors benefited from hearing from people of diverse backgrounds that lead to a better understanding of the challenges and accomplishments of these amazing students.

Another unique experience that virtual programs allowed occurred with this group as well. During the home hospitality social hour, Miguel Dominguez, a Chilean English teacher, played a Bach minuet on his cello, a rare insight into a visitor's personal interest. Since not all of the visitors were able to attend this meeting, Miguel asked to record his performance and to share it with the entire group. This type of personal connection really helps to build strong relationships.

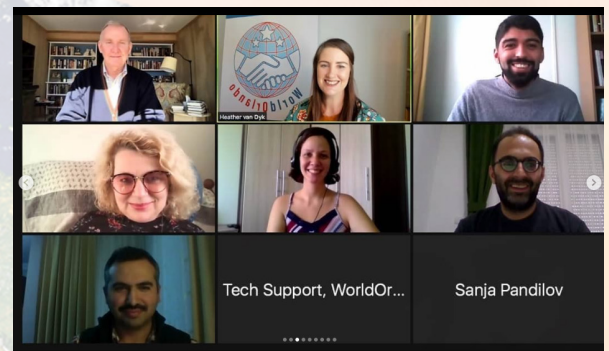
These virtual opportunities continue the long history of benefits provided by this exchange program. From sharing best practices in professional meetings, or sharing cultures over an informal dinner, all participants come away with new perspectives and better understanding. As these interactions are unscripted, and there is the opportunity to share the good, the bad, and the ugly of all societies, allowing for true learning. Bringing these up-and-coming leaders from around the world to New Hampshire helps to globalize perspectives here in the state and builds global connections.

Visitor reflections

"IVLP's unique opportunity allowed me to connect professionally with U.S. counterparts and fellow IVLP colleagues from all over the world. The knowledge I gained in these sessions provided me with useful tools that I will continue to reflect on as a teacher."

"Since the IVLP, I have already been invited to participate as a guest speaker at two online events organized by some of my international colleagues. Though I am still overwhelmed with everything I have learned, shared, and developed in this program. I'm really grateful for this life-changing opportunity!"

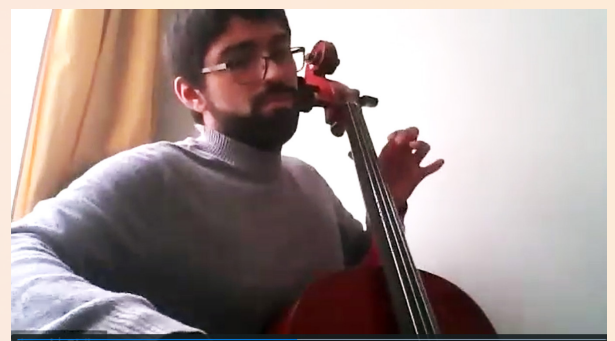
*Luciana Braga Carneiro Leao Junqueira
2021 English Language Teacher, Brazil*



2021 Education in the Digital Age group meets with Virtual Learning Academy

"As an English teacher and educator that works with underserved communities, it is highly important for me to make connections to share, learn and reflect from other people's experiences. Thanks to the IVLP program and the instances we had in New Hampshire, I had the wonderful opportunity to expand my horizons and enjoy learning and sharing about US and Chilean cultures."

*Miguel Domínguez
2021EFL teacher - Chile*



2021 Education in the Digital Age IVLP Participant Miguel plays the Cello



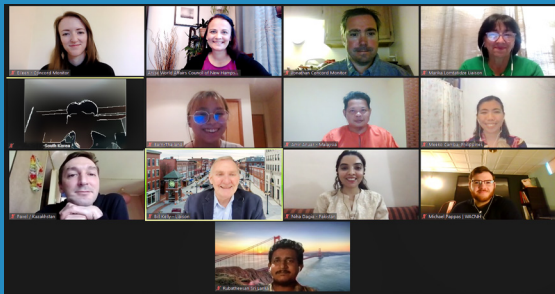
In-person or Virtual, NH Resources strengthen IVLP



The IVLP relies on a strong group of wonderful local volunteers who donate their time to building relationships with the up-and-coming leaders from around the world. Not only do they share their expertise with the visitors, they also gain so much from these experiences. Drawing from a wide range of professionals, this program provides numerous benefits and insights. Below are quotes from a number of the top meeting hosts in New Hampshire.

"It's been a pleasure to converse and exchange ideas with interesting people from around the world through the IVLP Program. In-person meetings are great because we can see each other's gestures, shake hands and express humor. However, as we have all learned, remote meetings are nice because of their convenience. I never thought I would talk to other professionals from various continents while sitting at my own kitchen table!"

Jonathan Van Fleet, Editor Concord Monitor



Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists Research and Investigation group meets with Concord Monitor

"I've had the pleasure to host and virtually present to numerous groups of international leaders through IVLP, I have greatly enjoyed the inquisitiveness of the participants, introspective questions and ensuing dialogue. It is consistently clear that despite different cultures, languages and the thousands of miles that separate us, we have much in common as we navigate today's challenges and opportunities that exist for organizational leaders who want to make a difference."

Matt Cookson, President CEO
Cookson Communications



NGO Management Marketing Workshop
by Cookson Communications

"In the past decade, I have had the privilege of meeting with members of the legal community and judiciary from many different foreign countries through the IVLP program. I have always found the visitors in the program to be enthusiastically engaged and eager to learn about the U.S. legal system and to share information on their own country's legal traditions. Participating in the program is one of the most edifying legal educational experiences in my career."

Daniel J. Lynch, Clerk of Court/U.S. Magistrate Judge
U.S. Federal District Court



IPR Enforcement Protection 2021 group meets
with U.S. Federal District Court

"I find IVLP meetings delightful and informing. Especially during the pandemic, the meetings have been the only way I get to meet people from other parts of the world who are interested in how news works in New Hampshire and are willing to share how it works in their country. These are important gatherings. I love the in-person meetings, but when they are not possible, I find the remote meetings a fine substitute."

Nancy West, Publisher - InDepthNH.org



Transparency and Accountability Holding Government Accountable
the Role of Watch Dog Groups

"While I have missed the experience of hosting visitors in my home, virtual visits offer a great reciprocal experience. Virtual visits give us the wonderful opportunity to see our visitors in their homes and to meet their families."

Steve Solomon

WACNH Board Member and Home Hospitality Host



Re-imagining Home Hospitality

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, IVLP Home Hospitality consisted of an American host opening his or her home to international visitors for a delicious meal and informal conversations on topics of interest. These opportunities created some of the strongest connections between NH residents and program participants. So much so that many of the hosts went to visit their guests in their home country, continuing their friendship for years to come.

The pandemic has forced a re-imagining of Home Hospitality and adaptation to the virtual world. Hosting these visits online has opened up many possibilities for connections that did not exist before. Virtual meetings give the opportunity to meet visitors' family and friends, as well as share more with them than before. From a cellist to a pianist, in addition to wives, husbands, and children, visitors can now share insights into their home lives. A quote from an 89-year-old host tells the story, "I can't travel the world anymore, so it's nice the world can come to me!"

As everyone looks forward to a time when these experiences can resume in-person, it is nice to know these global connections can continue to flourish in the virtual space.

A few words from some of our hosts

"My husband and I really enjoy the virtual get-togethers with people from around the world...especially during pandemic. Even though we're not sharing a dinner, as we usually did during pre-pandemic times, the conversations are still a meaningful way to get to know each other and share stories."

Diane Schaefer
WACNH Board Member
and Home Hospitality Host

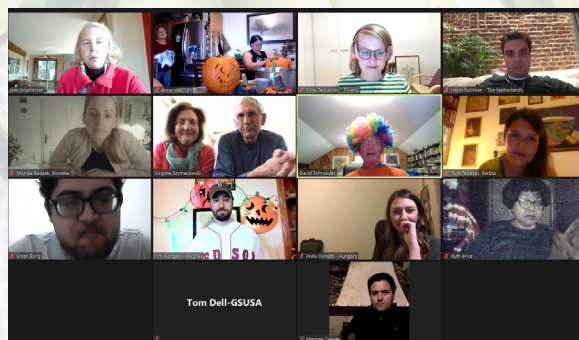


IPR Enforcement Protection in the US

"The vibrancy of WACNH's IVLP program gained a new dimension with the integration of virtual events. Virtual social hours provided opportunities for international visitors to meet citizens from throughout the state, expanding WACNH's New Hampshire outreach during a time when many felt isolated."

"IVLP is so enriching, broadening, and globe shrinking. Really we are all connected in one way or another and IVLP just makes it more tangible. As global travelers ourselves we have been shown much friendship and thoughtfulness and IVLP builds understanding through reciprocity."

Richard Lobban
Home Hospitality Host



Young European Political, Economic, and Social Leaders attend a virtual Halloween party

"Transcending local and global boundaries, the virtual events enabled rich discussions between international visitors and New Hampshire hosts. They shared experiences and perspectives in a highly-personalized format that opened up worlds."

Blake Allen
Home Hospitality Host



World Affairs Council of New Hampshire
2500 North River Rd
Manchester, NH 03103

Thank you for your ongoing
interest and support of the
IVLP in New Hampshire.
You are a true citizen
diplomat, helping to build
strong global connections.

wacnh.org 603-314-7970 council@wacnh.org



This publication is funded, in part by the Bureau of Education
and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State under the
authority of the Fulbright-Hays act of 1961, as amended.

