

Bridging Global and Local: Constructive Engagement with Difference at SUNY Potsdam



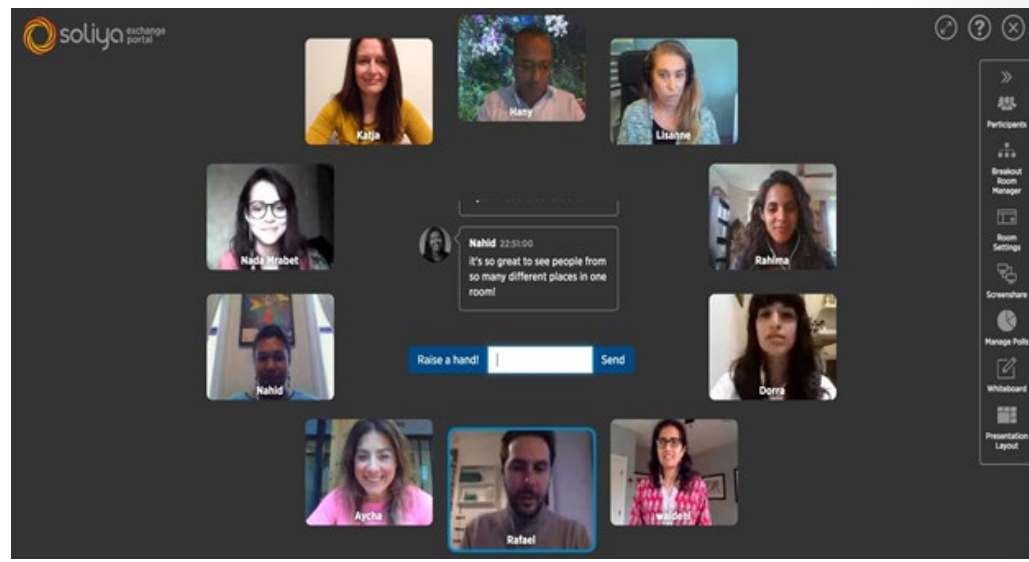
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SOLIYA

GLOBAL CONNECT PROGRAM



SOLIYA GLOBAL CONNECT

- 8 week (2h each) online cross-cultural education program
- Over 150 universities in 30 countries
- Facilitated & constructive engagement with cross-cultural differences and across national, cultural, religious, and ideological boundaries
- Builds community among participants
- Encourages self-reflection and critical thinking
- Explores perspectives, uncover biases, arrive at better understanding of cultures, develop global 21st competence
- Change in classroom dynamics

STUDENT VOICES

“The most important thing I learned was how to connect to people that I had thought were completely different from me, but are actually very similar to me.” – SUNY Potsdam student

“I learned to be open to new opinions and ideas even if you do not agree.” – SUNY Potsdam student

IMPACT AT SUNY POTSDAM

	Before	After
Participants who agreed/strongly agreed that they have <u>more similarities than differences</u> with their peers in the Middle East, North Africa, and South/Southeast Asia.	27%	82%
Participants who rated their <u>knowledge of the relationship between Western and predominantly Muslim societies</u> as high/very high.	19%	100%
Participants who rated their <u>confidence level about working in a culturally diverse setting</u> as high/very high.	59%	86%
Participants who agreed/strongly agreed that they have <u>spoken out or acted to promote awareness</u> about an issue related to the relationship between Western and predominantly Muslim societies.	30%	77%
Participants who agreed/strongly agreed that they have <u>high self-esteem</u> .	56%	86%



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Participants at SUNY Potsdam responded that ...

n = 407

Soliya motivated them to learn how dialogue can help them improve tensions and conflicts in their community.

90%

they built meaningful relationships through their participation in Soliya.

81%

Soliya increased their teamwork and collaborative problem-solving skills.

84%

they shared information about what they were learning with their peers and other people in their community.

100%

Soliya motivated them to challenge someone about stereotypes they hold about another group.

86%

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

Participants at SUNY Potsdam responded that ...

n = 407

they are glad chose to participate in the Soliya Connect Program.

93%

they engaged in positive learning about people from other cultures.

100%

Soliya increased their cross-cultural communication skills.

100%

participating in Soliya increased their critical thinking skills.

88%

participating in Soliya increased their interest in traveling/studying abroad.

91%



SOLIYA PILOT

FIRST-YEAR CONNECT - 1YC



1YC GOALS

- **Establish with students a culture of constructive discourse, before they step onto campus.**
 - Norms and expectations of constructive discourse (largely lacking in our broader society today) will make students feel heard and respected.
- **Empower students to be the example-setters and cultural norm-setters, especially during times of tension.**
 - Administrations will not be alone in trying to enforce norms. Students will be equipped and motivated to mobilize themselves.
- **Generate a unified sense of community across campus.**
 - 1YC will help to generate an increased sense of community across campus where all identity groups feel at home and embraced. It creates safe spaces while also protecting free speech on campus.

1YC DIALOG SESSIONS

- Meet students where they are – online and at home
- July 20 – August 14, 2020 once a week (2 hours)
- 8-12 students representative of diversity on campus: race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, geographic location, LGBTQ+, and political ideology
- Integration
 - Onboarding and Orientation
 - Ways 103 Talking about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Virtual exchange portal with Soliya and Potsdam facilitators

SUNY POTSDAM FACILITATORS

- Faculty
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Alumni
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- Eventual goal of 120-150 trained dialog facilitators
 - Summer 2020 goal is 30-40 SUNY Potsdam facilitators
 - 20-hour facilitation training
 - Co-facilitation
 - Summer, fall and spring
 - UN-endorsed certificate
 - Dialog in the classroom
 - Personal growth

The training sessions will include the following structure:

1. Program Intro & Active Listening
2. Neutrality, Multipartiality & Critical Thinking
3. Identity & Difference
4. Deepening Dialogue
5. Emotions & Conflict in Dialogue
6. Challenging Group Dynamics (polite, disengaged, etc.)
7. Co-Facilitation Practice
8. Power Dynamics, Bias, Practice
9. Session Planning, Practice
10. Final session - Practice, final program information

Questions?



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