Cultural Competence

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https://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/122869

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Cultural Competence: Getting Started

How to Use This Guide
This guide will help you become more aware of different cultures and get started on building competence. Keep in mind that increasing knowledge, building skills and enjoying training opportunities to communicate efficiently and appropriately with others is an ongoing engagement with many different events in education.

Included resources will help you:
- Understand more about cultures and cultural differences
- Become aware of local customs
- Find quick facts about a country, an ethnic group, or a religion
- Learn about the history, cultures and customs of a region or a country
- Prepare for going abroad

Technology
This subject of cultural awareness and competencies includes a variety of tools, such as Intercultural (interaction between at least two different cultures), intercultural (within the same culture), cross-cultural (comparing cultures), and multicultural (more than one culture). Courseware is not necessarily tied to specific boundaries, so intercultural communication is also distinct from international communication.

For more information, see our World's Intercultural, Intercultural, Cross-Cultural, and International Communication: What's the Difference? article and AAC&U's Cultures Competencies PDF.

Keep an Open Mind
Please note that the resources recommended within this guide may not reflect the University of Michigan or the library's position. Although we may share a particular perspective, often Western, with varying levels of bias, they should help you understand and respect some aspects of another culture without overthrowing your own values. Nonetheless, these resources may not cover every country and are not exhaustive. Keeping an open mind and adapting accordingly to specific circumstances may be helpful.

Interested in learning more about open-mindedness? Take a look at How to Be Culturally Open-Minded: A Psychological and Methodological Analysis (below).

Why is Intercultural Awareness Important?
The University of Michigan has a large international and intercultural population, as demonstrated by the enrollment may below. You may encounter people with different cultures and values that may affect communication and cultural understanding. Your current knowledge, sensitivity, and understanding of intercultural communication may be improved by reading more about others to broaden your cultural competency within the U.S. or abroad. Knowing about the local cultures of your destination may also help exposed anxiety and adjust your travel plans more efficiently.

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Student Enrollment by Country and Level

How to Increase Intercultural Awareness

U-M Cultural Training
Online training resource with units and sections for learning about the concept of culture and how skills, attitudes and behavior affect adaptation to live and work in a new environment.

Global Scholar Online Orientation
Your interactive online course outlines what to expect each day, helping you plan your day or plan your day while abroad with many videos. Upon completion you will receive a certificate in Global Scholars Orientation. "Go to the Orientation Landing Page.

World Editor's Guide (below)

Visually appealing, short PDPs with simple suggestions for Americans traveling or living abroad.

U-M Redesign Traveling
U-M will provide you with a comprehensive guide when learning how to cope with culture shock, stress, loneliness and more.

Student Travel Request Form (below)

Ready to explore? Click on a tag below.

About Finding Resources

This research project was completed by Shen Go as part of the Michigan Library School's Senior Internship in the Library of the University of Michigan Library.

Last Updated: 06/27/2016 | URL: http://libguides.lib.umich.edu/travel_and_stud abroad | http://library.umich.edu

Research Guides

Diversity
World Cultures
Regional Cultures
Study Abroad & Work Abroad

need help finding additional information? Ask a librarian.
Cultural Competence: Diversity

Increasing intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Getting Started Diversity World Cultures Regional Cultures Study/Work Abroad

Fun Resources

Standard Land Without Borders

The Gender Spectrum

Who's English? Quiz website

According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2012 and 2013, the U.S. is expected to become a "more diverse nation." One example of the increase in diversity of immigrants and current minority groups are expected to see.

Race & Ethnicity

What is the difference between race and ethnicity? View replies from NPR and California Newsroom's experts. Learn more about race and ethnicity on PBS's Race: The Power of an Illusion.

Click on the map below to visit the original source for a larger view.

University of Virginiamelon Cooper Center for Public Service's "Racial Dilemma" Map

American Indian and Alaska Native as a Percentage of County Population: 2010

American Diversity Demographics

Additional Diversity Constellations Aborigines

There are many other factors that contribute to our personal identity, sense of self, and perception. The infographic nesta gives us yet another way to see the U.S. and the people who share in our country's "landscape." What is your "landscape"?

Age Gender Language Orientation

Click on the image to visit the source for the larger infographic and other resources from the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, and other agencies.

Intercultural Communication

Why is developing intercultural communication skills important? The Society for Intercultural Education, Research and Exchange (SIREX) defines intercultural communication as "intercultural communication is the process of exchanging and understanding meaning between people from different cultural backgrounds." Understanding accents moves beyond the country of origin or primary language, recognizing cultural nuances and avoiding stereotypes.

Get Involved

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Strategic Planning Efforts Join a planning committee, participate in the conversation on the web, or email ideas and input to devegenius@umich.edu.
Cultural Competence: World Cultures

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

I want to browse by...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Series</th>
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Global Road Warrior (database)
This database provides basic country facts and lengthier articles on business, security, health, utilities, communication and entertainment. Addresses some stereotypes and demonstrates popular phrases in foreign languages. eBook versions available in Mirlyn.

CultureGrams (database)
Simple and easy to read overviews of over 200 countries, focusing on different populations' customs, lifestyles and societies from an American perspective. Includes a Kids, USA, Canada and World Edition.

Global Affairs Canada Country Insights (website)
The Canadian government's country profiles and guides to national cultures from Canadian and local perspectives. Includes resource links for additional information on culture, history, geography, etc.

Commissio Country Guides (website)
Country guides discuss language, culture, customs and etiquette. This website also features additional blog posts regarding cultural awareness.

Countries and Their Cultures (2001 ebook)
National entries include information on history, ethnic relations, urbanism, government, society, economy, religion, health, arts, food, etc.

Images, Videos & Graphs

CalPhotos: People & Culture (website)
Photo bank of people and places.

Ethnographic Video Online (database)
Videos of family, cultural identity, gender roles, arts, religion, etc.

Hofstede Country Cultural Dimensions Ratings (website)
Graphical representation of countries' ratings of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation & indulgence.
Cultural Competence: Regional Cultures

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Click on a region on the map or select a link below:

- USA & Canada
- Latin America & the Caribbean
- Europe
- Middle East & Northern Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia & Oceania
Cultural Competence: USA & Canada

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

***National Cultures***

**Culture Shock! ebook series (USA & Canada)**
Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

**Culture Smart! book series (USA & Canada)**
Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

**Global Affairs Canada - Country Information Canada (website)**
Canadian government's country insight and cultural information for Canada from local perspective. Covers communication, dress, social institutions, entertainment, stereotypes, etc.

**Kids.gov Cultures & Ethnic Groups (website)**
U.S. government's recommended links to resources related to African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans, and Women.

**Interexchange Learn About the U.S. (website)**
Recommendations for American books, TV/movies, music, sports, food, touristic attractions, as well as cultural activities in individual states.

***Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups***

**Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America (2000 ebook)**
Enteries by American ethnic group. Covers history, food, language, customs, greetings, social and gender dynamics, arts, media, etc.

**Multicultural America (2011 ebook)**
Enteries by immigrant groups in the U.S. Covers background, migration and assimilation, demographic profile, impact on the U.S., later generations, notable people, etc. Includes timeline, map and statistics.

Enteries by Canadian ethnic group. Covers origins, migration, community, family, culture, religion, politics, etc.

**A Native American Encyclopedia (2015 book)**
Enteries organized by region and ethnic group. Includes overview, history, religion, government, customs, economy, dress, war and contemporary issues.

***Images, Videos & Graphs***

**American Indian History Online (database)**
Summaries, videos, slideshows, biographies, primary sources, maps and graphs on American Indian groups.
Cultural Competence: Latin America & the Caribbean

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

News Sources

- Newspaper Map
  Find newspaper websites by location on a map.

- Library PressDisplay
  Browse electronic, recent issues of world newspapers by country.

Academic Texts

- Latin America Reader series
  Titles by country. Anthologies of essays from different authors on history, politics and society.

- Perspectives on... series
  Anthology of essays on history, politics, society and culture that provide a multiperspectival view.

- Perspectives on Las Americas (ebook)
  Includes discourse on identity, popular culture and transnational political culture.

- Perspectives on the Caribbean (book)
  Includes discourse on identity, beliefs and globalization.

U-M Library Research Guides

- AAS 473: Brazil History and Culture
- Anthropology 330: Mexico: Culture and Society
- Brazilian Studies
- Caribbean Art and Visual Culture
- DAAS 495: Transforming History: Haiti, Cuba and the Caribbean Region
- From Colonial Saint-Domingue to Independent Haiti
- LACS 321 Inca, Aztec and the Spanish Conquest
- LACS 321: Indigenous Identity and Community in the Neoliberal Andes
- Latin American & Caribbean Studies

National & Regional Cultures

- All Resources
  Print Only

  Regional

  Pop Culture Latin America: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle (2005 book)
  Overview of contemporary Latin American popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icons, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.

  Endangered Peoples of Latin America: Struggles to Survive and Thrive (2001 book)
  Chapters sorted by region and communities. Provides information on traditional economy, social and political organization, religion, and threats to survival.

  National

  Culture Shock! ebook series (Latin America & the Caribbean)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

  Cultures and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean series
  Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

  Culture Smart! book series (Latin America & the Caribbean)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

References by Subject

- History & Culture
- Arts & Literature
- Beliefs
- Print Only

  History & Culture

  Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture (2008 ebook)
  Entries by concept. Covers Portuguese-speaking regions and includes people, places, works, policies, languages, etc.

  The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures (2001 ebook)
  Entries by concept. Includes people, arts, religion, major civilizations' geography, cultural ecology, language and history.

  Entries by concept. Includes arts, literature, media, political and social institutions, biographies, etc.

  Historical Dictionaries of Latin America & The Caribbean book series
  Encyclopedia titles by country. Brief entries on concepts, major historical and recent events, places and people.

Images, Videos & Graphs

- Videos

  Latin America in Video (database)
  Spanish video database for a variety of fields browsable by country.

  Americas (1993 video)
  English & Spanish video on issues that prevail in Latin America.

- Graphs

  Glencoe World Geography textbook - Ch.8: The Cultural Geography of Latin America (PDF)
  Simple overview of Latin American people, history and culture. Includes graphs and maps for ethnic groups, languages, migration and urbanization, historical empires and religions.
Regional & National Cultures

All Resources  Print Only

Regional

Entries by ethnic group. Includes flag, map, descriptions of the people, their homeland, language, etc.

Ethnic Groups of Europe: An Encyclopedia (2011 book)
Entries by ethnic group. Overview discusses history, demography, language, etc.

Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture (2005 book)
Volumes organized by region, entries by country. Covers geography and demography, minorities, language, political systems, cultural development, etc.

Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe: From the Congress of Vienna to the Fall of Communism (2000 book)
Entries by concept. However, there are country-specific entries on geography, art, culture, language, literature, etc.

Southeast Europe: People and Culture (website)
Select a country to view introductory text and additional articles related to art, dance & theater, film, gastronomy, literature, music and sports.

National

Culture Shock! ebook series (Europe)
Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and fast facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

Cultures and Customs of Europe book series
Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

Culture Smart! book series (Europe)
Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

Pop Culture Germany! (2006 book)
Overview of contemporary German popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icons, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.

Images & Videos

Europeana Collections (website)
Database of artworks, artifacts, books, videos and sounds from museums, libraries and universities across Europe.

Sputnik Images (website)
Photo bank of historical images and coverage of current Russian and international events. Website viewable in English and Russian.
Cultural Competence: Middle East & Northern Africa

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Regional & National Cultures

- Encyclopaedic Ethnography of Middle-East and Central Asia (2005 book)
  Entries by ethnic group. Includes overview of geography and population, language, history, society, family, ethnic conflict, economy, religion, culture, etc.

- Pop Culture Arab World: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle (2005 book)
  Overview of contemporary Middle Eastern popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icons, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.

- Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East: Struggles to Survive and Thrive (2002 ebook)
  Chapters sorted by region and communities. Provides information on traditional economy, social and political organization, religion, and threats to survival.

- Global Connections: Middle East Culture (website)
  Basic introduction to culture, language, religion of the Middle East in general, with timeline (up to 2002) and links to additional information.

- Culture Shock! ebook series (Middle East & Northern Africa)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and fast facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

- Cultures and Customs book series (Northern Africa) & Cultures and Customs of the Palestinians (2004 book)
  Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

- Culture Smart! book series (Middle East & Northern Africa)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

Images & Videos

- Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings (website)
  The Arab American Museum's online exhibit of photos, graffiti images, videos and songs about the uprisings in the Arab World from 2010 to 2013. Curated by U-M associate professor & PhD student.

- Yousef Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art (website)
  The University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum's online collection of art from the Islamic Middle East, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, India and the Himalayas.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try these resources:

- CultureGrams
- Global Road Warrior
- GoinGlobal
- Encyclopedia of World Cultures
- MyWorldAbroad
Cultural Competence: Sub-Saharan Africa

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Regional & National Cultures

All Resources  Print Only

Regional

Entries by ethnic group. Visual guide to history, language, ways of life, social structure, culture & religion.

Entries by region, country and major civilizations. Visual guide to history and peoples of countries.

Brief introductory entries on African language families, languages by country, and peoples and nations by country.

Africa South of the Sahara: A Geographical Interpretation (2013 book)
Broad introduction to African cultural diversity, gender dynamics, geomorphology, climate, history, population, economies, resources, current development and issues, etc.

Into Africa: A Guide to Sub-Saharan Culture and Diversity (2009 ebook)
General introduction to African communities, communication, customs, business etiquette, travel tips and regional differences.

National

Culture Shock! ebook series (Africa)
Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and last facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

Cultures and Customs of Africa book series
Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

Culture Smart! book series (Africa)
Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

Society and Culture Complete Report ebook series
Entries by country. Information on gift giving, greetings, holidays, life cycles, religion, sports, stereotypes, folklore, women, etc. Identical report and additional information on Global Road Warrior.

Historical Dictionaries of Africa series
Encyclopedia titles by country. Brief entries on concepts, major historical and recent events, places and people.

Academic Texts

Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry (ebook)
Essays about the transformation, spread, audience and appropriation of Nollywood, Nigeria’s video film industry.

Perspectives on Africa (book)
Anthology of essays on history, politics, society and culture that provide a multiperspectival view. Includes discourse on kinship, hunter-gatherers, beliefs, arts, gender relations, historical and modern transformations.

U-M Library Research Guides

- African and Diaspora Art and Visual Culture
- African Studies
- Lusophone Africa

Websites

Art & Life in Africa
Visual galleries and topic essays on art in and related to everyday life, education, ancient times, medicine, cultural exchange, etc. Country pages display key facts and figures, historical summary and local artworks.

Our Africa
Country specific facts and figures, videos, images and descriptions of poverty, healthcare, food, daily life, people, culture, geography, nature, music, family, economy, education, jobs, history, politics, tourism, etc.

African Writing Online
Short texts from African writers and articles about African literary works and authors.

Africaguide
General African arts and culture, food, tribe, music, festivals information, basic country overviews, photo library and articles related to touristic travels in Africa.

Africa: The Art of a Continent
The Guggenheim Museum’s introductory online exhibit to artifacts, films and photographs from Africa. Use the clickable map to view by region.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try these resources:

CultureGrams  Global Road Warrior  GoiGloba  Encyclopedia of World Cultures  MyWorldAbroad
Cultural Competence: Asia & Oceania

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

News Sources
- Newspaper Map
  Find newspaper websites by location on a map.
- Library PressDisplay
  Browse electronic, recent issues of world newspapers by country.

Academic Texts
- Oceania (book)
  Volume 1 provides a collective overview of the region, activities, Ho cycle, maps; Volume 2 is region-specific and discusses social relations, languages, politics, beliefs, etc.
- Popular Culture Co-production and Collaborations in East and Southeast Asia (ebook)
  Essays on popular culture and cinema in East and Southeast Asia.
- Everyday Life in Southeast Asia (ebook)
  Anthology of essays on the identities, beliefs, traditions, religions and popular cultures of various people in Southeast Asia.

Regional & National Cultures

Regional
- Encyclopaedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania (2009 book)
  Entries by ethnic group. Includes an overview of location, time period, ancestry and language, followed by a timeline and details about history, cultural identity, etc.
  Encyclopedic entries by ethnic group. Overview describes population and history.
- Encyclopedia of Modern Asia (2003 ebook)
  Entries by concept. Includes people, festivals, themes, and subject entries on architecture, cuisine, cinema, literature, etc.
- Charting the Pacific (website)
  Discover stories of lives in the Pacific and explore maps, country profiles, and regional statistics and issues.

National
- Culture Shock! ebook series (Asia & Oceania)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and fast facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.
- Cultures and Customs Books series (Asia)
  Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.
- Culture Smart! book series (Asia & Oceania)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.
- Etiquette Guides ebook series (China, Korea & the Philippines)
  Titles by country. Includes information on character and values of the people, social etiquette, business etiquette and useful expressions.
- The Encyclopedia of New Zealand (website)
  New Zealand government’s online encyclopedia with entries on different ethnic groups, regions, creative and daily life, government, social concepts, nature, etc.

Images, Videos & Documents
- ECAI Pacific Language Mapping (website)
  Language atlas of the Pacific area, Southeast Asia, and Madagascar.
- Yousef Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art (website)
  The University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum’s online collection of art from the Islamic Middle East, China, Japan, Southeast Asia and the Himalayas.
- Trove (website)
  The National Library of Australia’s digital collection of Australian books, images, newspapers, maps, music, websites, etc.
- Coononet TV (website)
  Interactive timeline, games, photos, blogs, videos about and from people in the Pacific.
- Tribal Asia (2004 book)
  A photobook of tribes in ancient Arabia, India, mountains, Central Asia and Malay archipelago.

Can’t find what you’re looking for? Try these resources:
- CultureGrams
- Global Road Warrior
- GoinGlobal
- Encyclopedia of World Cultures
- MyWorldAbroad
Cultural Competence: Study/Work Abroad

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Getting Started  Diversity  World Cultures  Regional Cultures  Study/Work Abroad

Things to keep in mind when preparing to go abroad...

U-Pacific Cultural Training

Online training resource with units and sections for learning about the concept of culture and how skills, attitudes and behaviors affect adaptation to a new and unfamiliar environment.

Global Scholar Online Learning

This interactive online course outlines what to do and expect before, during and after going abroad with many videos. Upon completion of the course, you can receive a 'Global Scholar Certificate.' Registration required.

World Citizens Guide (brochures)

Visually appealing, short PDFs with simple suggestions for Americans traveling or working abroad.

U-M Resilient Traveling

U-M's project website dedicated to helping students traveling abroad to learn how to cope with culture shock, stress, loneliness and more. Click on 'Self-Assessment' to take an online mental health screening.

Going Abroad Articles

MyWorldAbroad

Articles address various concerns related to international job and program applications, and emphasize that there are valuable skills to be learned before, during and after going abroad. Additional features include self-evaluations and resource links.

GoOverseas

Short overview of select countries and cities. Various articles about studying, teaching, interning and volunteering abroad. Includes program search.

GoAbroad.com

Read articles and reviews, and search for study, volunteer, intern and teach abroad programs.

TransitionsAbroad

Articles on work, study, travel and living abroad. This website has a large leisure travel section and its own online magazine.

Business-Specific Webpages

GoinGlobal

Country guides & USA/Canada City Career Guides provide business-focused cultural advice. Includes employer profiles, visa regulations, job application guidelines and trends, and jobs/internships listing.

World Business Culture

Business culture and etiquette guide to countries.

Business Insider Country Communication Chart

Diagrams of how different nationals negotiate business.

Passport to Trade European Business Culture

Select a country to read more about its business culture (communication, etiquette, etc.). Also includes information about the country, its history, cultural taboos, education, transport, being a foreigner in the country, and additional resource links.

How to speak and act?

Etiquette 101: Listen Up (article)

How to say hello, good-bye, please, thank you and help in various languages, and country-specific greeting tips.

JourneyWoman What Should I Wear & Where (website)

*What to wear* tips for women traveling to select countries.

CultureCrossing Etiquette Guide (website)

Community-built and basic work and study etiquette guides by country.

Eating Abroad: The Cultural Resonance of Food (article)

An article that shares food tips for travelers.

U-M Library Research Guides

- Study Abroad Top 10 Countries
- Prep Course for Japan Trip - Library Guide
- Career Resources
- Funding for Students
- Funding Sources for School of Public Health Graduate Students
- Grants and Fundraising
- Social Work: Global Practice
- Stamps International Experience