Building Bridges

Bridges.

A few days ago, I listened to a politician discuss the challenge of replacing a bridge in his state. Everyone agreed that it was the right thing to do but no one was willing to take on the challenge because of the unknown risk attached to it. For him, the benefit of trying seemed greater than the reality of standing still and so he did what everyone said was impossible and built a better bridge.

I think this is where we stand today. With some of the scariest parts of the pandemic behind us (hopefully) we all find ourselves looking beyond our own borders and into the world and wondering if we can return to the global ecosystem of just a few months ago. The world certainly looks different today and the unknown of what it might look like tomorrow is vast. How do we restart, reengage, rebuild what we had before? Will the risk be too high? Have we lost too much already?
Is it worth it?
Without a doubt the benefit is greater than the reality of just standing still.
After World War II the world became more open and accessible and better because of it. The post–Cold War world developed as even more intertwined and interrelated and is better for it. In today’s world we have better systems, better products, better ideas, better processes, better businesses because we have the influence of so many cultures, minds, and ideas coming together.

“We all find ourselves looking beyond our own borders and into the world and wondering if we can return to the global ecosystem of just a few months ago.”

During the past decade we at IIB and the Kelley School have worked on projects throughout the world including Myanmar, the West Bank, Jordan, China, Thailand, India, Kenya, Barbados, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Ghana, Botswana, Guatemala, and Indonesia. The one thing that holds true across all of these places—is that our work, our ideas, and we as individuals are all made better by being a part of the world community.

At the Kelley School and IIB we are committed to helping reimagine how global business succeeds at its best level. To meet the challenges of our new normal we are dedicated in aiding businesses as they restart their engines—to prove that the world is irrepressible beyond our expectations. Alongside our partners in business, government, and society we will all come together to meet this and the next challenge with resourcefulness and resiliency.

Is it hard and likely to be harder in the near term? Of course. Will it be exactly like before? Of course not—but maybe it will be even better.

Bridges.
Even in these times of uncertainty we need to find the courage and the inspiration to build them and continue to cross them.

LaVonn Schlegel is the executive director of Kelley’s Institute for International Business

CIBER Expands Outreach to Pre-College Students

IU CIBER launches two new online initiatives to increase global resources available to middle and high school students and teachers.

What did you want to be when you grew up, and is that what you are doing today? There are many career paths that students are not aware of, and the CIBER Career Series introduces students to the broad spectrum of career opportunities that exist. This video series also highlights the importance of language and culture across careers.

Student opinions on high school foreign language are split—they love it, or are sitting through it to meet graduation requirements. Having a language background can open up many career options for students. We will explore careers that traditionally are associated with language fluency such as Foreign Service officer, but also those that benefit from the value of international skills in other areas such as business, hospitality, and trades. The first interview in the series featured Kelley faculty member Katie Metz discussing her career as an international tax accountant. Upcoming videos include international business, health care translator, corporate lawyer living abroad, and a pastry chef. The interviews can be found on our Kelley International YouTube channel. If you are interested in sharing your career, please let us know at ciber@indiana.edu.

The second new initiative is an extension of our popular CIBER Focus Interview Series. Two area social studies teachers have developed lesson plans utilizing the series to incorporate relevant and timely international topics into grades 7–12. By having local teachers develop these plans, we ensure that they follow Indiana’s state curricula standards. The lesson plans are available for free on our website (go.iu.edu/2i25). Development of lesson plans will continue throughout the upcoming months and include additional teachers and subject areas.

IU CIBER is committed to raising awareness for the value of international skills and competencies. These initiatives will add to the resources available for educators to bring international content into their classrooms.

At the IU Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), housed in the Institute for International Business (IIB), we leverage the institutional strengths of Indiana University and the Kelley School of Business to help U.S. businesses compete successfully in the global marketplace. We are a national resource center—one of only 15 such centers funded by a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education.
GBI Alum Adnen Ben Hadj Yahia Takes Action against COVID-19

A few months after I returned from the Global Business Institute program in 2015, I co-founded Tunisia’s first social innovation hub, EL SPACE. EL SPACE applies business skills to find solutions for social change issues.

At EL SPACE, we have Fab Labs, Youth Entrepreneurship, Open Democracy, and Technology programs. With the COVID-19 outbreak, EL SPACE called together the local communities we have been working with, as well as our own community of makers and technology enthusiasts, to design solutions for medical staff. The main challenge was designing a better quality, low cost, and easy-to-make face shield for hospitals and medical staff. Tunisian hospitals did not have face shields in the past, which became a great problem in fighting the pandemic.

As entrepreneurs and technology fanatics, we do not have the capabilities to treat those who are sick, so supporting medical staff on the front lines to help them stay healthy and protected was the least we could do to “flatten the curve.” Our community members designed a medical face shield that we could produce with 3D printers.

After several meetings, the Ministry of Health approved the 3D-printed face shield design in mid-March. This was a great milestone for us to move forward with creating a decentralized manufacturing and distribution network where we engaged community members and partners who had access to 3D printers as well as volunteers to achieve the “impact formula.” Network members produce face shields, volunteers handle distribution, and an online tool oversees management.

What is unique about our ability to help is that it is not like the traditional response to health issues where everything is centrally located within government agencies. For me, it was time that local businesses leverage their resources to take action to provide a faster and more efficient alternative to the Ministry’s outdated management and distribution system. If we were to send the design to the government and have only them make the shields, it would take much longer to print and send these out to hospitals. That is why we all worked together with the Ministry of Health and local hospitals, so our decentralized system allowed everyone to play their part in this pandemic. After all, the goal is to make as many face shields as possible and distribute them to hospitals as soon as possible.

As of today (April 26), we have engaged more than 50 3D printers in different cities across Tunisia, and made and delivered more than 3,000 face shields. We are still producing more while coordinating with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Industries to engage bigger businesses to use our design to produce at a larger scale.

The U.S. Department of State, the Coca-Cola Company, and IIB work together in a public-private partnership to conduct the Global Business Institute (GBI). From 2012 to 2018 this multifaceted, immersive program gave more than 600 students from across participating countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Near Asia the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and business in the context of American culture.
IU’s Global Gateway Office in Mexico City

As IIB continues to serve as the Kelley School’s focal point for international outreach, IIB’s Timothy Smith traveled to Mexico City this past February where he met with the IU Mexico Global Gateway Office’s director, Molly Fisher. Opened in 2018, the IU Mexico Gateway allows IU faculty, staff, and students to fully immerse themselves in academic activities and partnerships in Mexico. The gateway presence helps link local institutional partners, alumni, and students more closely with IU, and increases the visibility and impact of our academic and research activities in Latin America.

The gateway is designed to support and create new connections between Indiana University and local Mexican institutions. We support logistics to hold workshops, seminars, talks, etc., and we have cooperated with creating links and introductions between IU faculty members with their counterparts at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico (UNAM). While housed in UNAM, the IU Mexico Gateway also works with other Mexican universities, such as Universidad Anahuac, Universidad Iberoamericana, Tec de Monterrey, and Universidad Panamericana.

Indiana’s ties to Mexico continue to expand economically, culturally, and demographically. In 2018, Indiana exported more than $5 billion in goods and products to Mexico. Additionally, according to data gathered by the IU Public Policy Institute, Latinos are the fastest-growing and youngest minority population in the state of Indiana.

IU’s Global Gateways exist as key entry points to the rest of the world, and are serving to strengthen IU’s global impact. With five Global Gateway Offices in China, India, Germany, Mexico, and Thailand, the Global Gateway Network builds relationships with universities, institutes, NGOs, government, and businesses around the world, creating opportunities for research, partnerships, conferences, workshops, overseas study, and internships for the global IU community. The IU Global Gateway Network is a key component of Indiana University’s Bicentennial Strategic Plan. With facilities around the globe, the establishment of the network marks a milestone in the university’s international engagement.
I’ve always wanted to go to Chile. For as long as I can remember, the country has fascinated me even though I admittedly didn’t know much about it until very recently. Ceviche, deserts, wine country, proximity to Antarctica, rich history—I want to experience it all. Fun fact—Chile is over 2,600 miles long but is just over 200 miles wide at its widest point, which means you can be at the ocean from anywhere in the country in three hours at most.

When I was asked if I wanted to participate in a 2020 Faculty Development in International Business (FDIB) trip, I knew immediately that this was the perfect opportunity to finally go to Chile. So, in early January, I went to Santiago with nine faculty members from universities all over the country to participate in “Understanding the International Business Environment through Innovation and Sustainability in Chile,” a trip hosted by Temple University’s CIBER program. We spent a full week in Santiago and surrounding areas visiting a diverse array of businesses and learning about Chile’s economy and its connection with global business. Among my favorites were Antofagasta, an international mining company; WOM, a rising star start-up telecommunications company featuring Indiana University alumnus Kris Brigham; and Jet Smart, an ultra-low-cost airliner servicing South America. We also visited three wineries to learn about innovation in the Chilean wine export industry, wine tourism, and environmental responsibility in agriculture.

One of the best parts of this trip, by far, was making lifelong personal and professional connections with the other trip participants. I was quite nervous to travel to another continent solo to spend a week with a group of complete strangers, but looking back, the group dynamic ended up making the trip more enriching than I could have ever imagined.

I had a unique opportunity to integrate what I learned on the trip almost immediately, into my spring 2020 classes. Each spring, I teach sections of a 200-level global financial reporting class, so I was able to quickly draw upon my experiences in Chile to provide examples and context to international accounting. Importantly, I drew heavily on conversations I had while in Chile about the social unrest (which coincidentally began the week I booked my flights for the trip) to contextualize the importance of cultural considerations in business decisions. I will also be able to use information about the Chilean tax system to create a comparative case for my intermediate tax class in the fall.

I have also integrated my Chile trip experience into How to Teach College, the pedagogy-focused podcast I host. My podcast partner, Dawn Wisher, and I frequently discuss the concept of “lifelong learning” on the show, so I have been able to talk about the importance of experiential learning via my Chile trip. I also produced a special edition of the podcast featuring an interview about my experience on the Chile FDIB trip. I will continue to use anecdotes from the trip to support my teaching and service for years to come.

I had high expectations for a visit to Chile and through the generosity of the Indiana University CIBER program, the FDIB trip exceeded my expectations in unimaginable ways. It was truly a “trip of a lifetime.” I’m looking forward to returning to Chile and to participating in another FDIB trip some day soon.
About Us

Founded in 2010, Institute for International Business (IIB) is Kelley’s focal point for international outreach. Our mission is to transform lives, organizations, and communities by creating and nurturing partnerships that build business and entrepreneurial knowledge in emerging and developing markets.

We work to expand the way people think about themselves in the world and how they interact with others from around the world. Through our field work and programs, we bring people and organizations together to create economic opportunities for individuals and communities.

“Idie is a stellar and visionary leader, and this recognition is well deserved.”

Lauren Robel, IU Bloomington Provost and Executive Vice President