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## MAJOR-SPECIFIC STUDY & INTERN ABROAD PROGRAMS

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### DIVERSITY ABROAD

KEI welcomes students from diverse backgrounds which reflect the ethnic and cultural complexity of our increasingly global world. Person-to-person contact and "soft diplomacy" is the key toward improving understanding between groups of people. Bringing together students of different ethnic groups, religions, sexual orientations, political viewpoints and physical abilities can help facilitate the exchange of ideas and the breaking down of negative stereotypes.

This guide provides an overview of issues, cultural norms and resources related to gender, religion, ethnic background, sexual identity or orientation and physical disability. It is intended to be a starting point for further research on the issues.

Introduction	page 1
Ethnic Diversity	page 2
Religious Diversity	page 6
Physical Disabilities	page 12
GLBTQ Students	page 13
Female Students	page 15

Please help us keep this guide updated by letting us know if any of the resources are outdated (broken links) or if you know of additional reliable resources.

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### INTRODUCTION

When you are abroad, you will meet a fascinating variety of people; some who are very accepting of differences and some who are not. Depending on your destination, you may face more discrimination than you might expect or have faced before, or you may be amazed at the capacity for tolerance of your host culture.

We encourage you to learn as much as possible about the following issues before going abroad.

1. Legal rights and laws pertaining to your host country
2. Boundaries of local acceptance
3. Social perceptions of GLBT, people of color, people with disabilities, etc.

4. Gender roles assigned to individuals
5. Any support groups available in your host city/country
6. Contact information for the local US consulate
7. Prior experiences of students in your host country

KEI does not discriminate based on gender, religion, ethnic background, sexual identity or orientation, political viewpoints, physical disability, age or veteran status. To promote more diversity abroad, we formed strong partnerships with Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College and other HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). In addition, KEI fully supports the University of Pittsburgh's upcoming documentary on GLBTQ and Ethnic Minorities in study abroad.

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The world is made of people of all colors and backgrounds, and part of the thrill of studying abroad is meeting people who are different than you. Chances are you will meet people with very open attitudes and people who are unrelentingly closed-minded. Rather than writing off these last as a "lost cause," we challenge you to develop a relationship with them and try to change their perceptions over a long period of time.

As an American abroad, no matter what your ethnic background, your reputation precedes you. American movies and television are exported everywhere, and a person who has never met an American in real life can only base their perceptions on these media-hyped portrayals. Our alumni often tell us that their new friends abroad say "You really changed my opinion about Americans."

### China

China is a largely homogenous culture. A little over 90 percent of the population descends from Chinese Han ancestry. This level of ethnocentricity has sometimes affected how Chinese Han view ethnic minorities within China, such as Tibetans and Mongols. Foreigners are seen as curiosities and normally stand out in a homogeneous population. Chinese tend to be polite towards foreigners, but that may hide a general xenophobic feeling.

Due to the media's portrayal of non-white people, Chinese tend to create negative stereotypes and misperceptions. On rare occasions, some students experienced refusal in certain hostels due to the color of their skin.

Asian-Americans are not immune to discrimination. This often stems from perceived history of subservience to colonial powers. In addition, many students of Asian-American background feel a dissonance between how they previously related to Asian culture and what they experience while in China itself.

Overall most students have come to realize that most of the attention and staring is due to people's curiosity.

- Asian Racism: Cold Truths Are Beginning to Surface - <http://www.iht.com/articles/1992/04/15/eddi.php>
- China's secret scourge: Racism inside the Great Wall - [http://newscafe.ansci.usu.edu/archive/sept2002/0927\\_racism.html](http://newscafe.ansci.usu.edu/archive/sept2002/0927_racism.html)

- Guess Who's Coming to Dinner: Student Racism in China and America - <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/%7Elcrew/pubd/guesswho.html>
- The China Expat: Racism in China - <http://www.thechinaexpat.com/racism-in-china/>
- Student experiences racism in the China field - <http://www.peak.sfu.ca/the-peak/98-2/issue9/chinafieldschool.html>
- China racism - <http://simonworld.mu.nu/archives/076861.php>

### Ecuador & Latin America

Most of the population of Ecuador & Mexico consists of white/mestizos and indigenous peoples. Only a small fraction of the population is black. Negative stereotyping is usually the cause of racism throughout the two countries.

Many Afro-Ecuadorian women tend to resort to prostitution. Therefore, African-American women should be aware that there is a possibility they could be thought of as prostitutes. Catcalling, grabbing & harassment are not rare events, especially in rural areas.

Students studying in Mexico have noticed that race relations are more lax. Due to the large tourist industry, Mexicans are used to having people of all colors. Mexicans tend to be curious about the student and ask questions to satisfy their curiosity. Students are seen as American first, especially when you are speaking less than perfect Spanish.

Remember that Mexico and Ecuador are in North and South America, and so the people there can (and sometimes do) legitimately call themselves "Americans!" The United States does not have a monopoly on the term "American."

- A black and white issue - [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/worldcup2002/hi/team\\_pages/ecuador/newsid\\_193500/1935943.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/worldcup2002/hi/team_pages/ecuador/newsid_193500/1935943.stm)
- Rantum Scoot: A Collaborative Blog on Writing and Research - [http://www.stanford.edu/group/howiwrite/blog/archives/2005/07/finding\\_a\\_topic\\_2.html](http://www.stanford.edu/group/howiwrite/blog/archives/2005/07/finding_a_topic_2.html)
- The Effect of Ethnicity on the Development of Cultural Awareness and Identity in a Study Abroad Setting - [http://www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/200503/papers/paper\\_phillip.html](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/jur/200503/papers/paper_phillip.html)

### England

England is a multiethnic country. Since World War II, substantial immigration from the New Commonwealth, Europe, and the rest of the world has considerably altered the demographic make-up of many cities in England. According to the 2001 British Census, over half of the 8 million people living in London are non-white/non-European. London is the most cosmopolitan or ethnically diverse city in Europe.

Comparatively speaking, discrimination in England is much lower than in other countries in Europe and around the world. However, despite numerous laws, there is still lingering discrimination against people with darker skin.

- Diversity in England - <http://83.137.212.42/sitearchive/cre/diversity/diversity.html>
- UK Advice Guide (government) - [http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/your\\_rights/discrimination.htm](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/your_rights/discrimination.htm)

## France

France has a long history of racism, although the government is actively trying to address this now. Despite this, France has long been considered a refuge for people seeking asylum from persecution.

Much of the racism in contemporary France stems from unresolved issues over colonialism. Black Africans and Northern African Arabs have moved to France in large numbers, stoking fears about Islam fundamentalism and economic slowdown. Arab Muslim youths have the highest rate of unemployment in France, and often feel marginalized by society. The riots of spring 2007 were provoked by an overly strong police reaction to a minor offense by a Muslim youth.

Students of color are seen as American first. In fact, many white French people will not grasp the concept of having a double identity, as French immigration policy has historically stressed assimilation over cultural heritage.

## India

India is remarkably diverse, with two thousand ethnic groups and every major religion represented. India's population of approximately 1.17 billion people comprises approximately one-sixth of the world's population. Despite this diversity, people with darker skin may experience slight discrimination. Caucasian female students, especially those with light colored hair, may also experience unsolicited gestures and the occasional groping by men.

- Representing India: Ethnic Diversity and the Governance of Public Institutions - [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/\(httpPublications\)/20B6604D84AB2149C125717F002EB265?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpPublications)/20B6604D84AB2149C125717F002EB265?OpenDocument)

## Ireland

Ireland is predominantly Caucasian. Until recently, Ireland had little immigration. However, in the last 10 years there have been a growing number of Asian and African immigrants moving to Ireland due to its robust economy and employment opportunities.

African-American and Hispanic-Americans may encounter verbal profanities on the street, usually fueled by alcohol. Unless there is a reaction, these verbal attacks generally do not lead to physical confrontations.

- Can we draw comfort from the recent election? - <http://www.dcu.ie/alumni/summer02/p8.html>
- Show Racism the Red Card - <http://www.theredcard.ie/>
- Migrants' Experience of Racism & Discrimination in Ireland: Survey Report - [http://www.esri.ie/news\\_events/latest\\_press\\_releases/migrants\\_experience\\_of\\_ra\\_2/index.xml](http://www.esri.ie/news_events/latest_press_releases/migrants_experience_of_ra_2/index.xml)

## Italy

Most African-American students don't encounter much discrimination in Italy. Most racist incidents are directed towards the Rom (aka Gypsies) and non-EU Muslims. Moderate- and far-right governments have not helped the situation by enacting strict residency laws and reducing access to work permits.

- Analytical study on discrimination and racist violence in Italy: 2000-2002 (PDF) - [http://www.cospe.it/uploads/documenti/allegati/rapporto\\_2002\\_su\\_violenza\\_razzista\\_en.pdf](http://www.cospe.it/uploads/documenti/allegati/rapporto_2002_su_violenza_razzista_en.pdf)

## Kenya

African-American students should not expect to be welcomed as a long-lost cousin. African-Americans are viewed by most Kenyan's as American.

Americans often report that people shout *mzungu* ("white person" in Swahili) in the street. While uncomfortable it usually does not carry a negative connotation. Alternately, white people may be harassed by aggressive vendors, under the belief that the visitor is a rich foreigner.

Most American students say they encounter incidents of political discrimination. As in the rest of the world, the American administration is unpopular, and people feel free to express their distaste for the American president and policies.

## Russia

Moscow State University has a very diverse international student body. You will get to meet students from Africa, Latin America & Asia. The campus is safe and welcoming. However, students of color have tended to encounter moments of racism in Russia. This applies to both large & small cities. Study abroad students have experienced racism through poor service in restaurants (although this common for all students) and difficulty getting a taxi.

- Russian racism 'out of control' - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4969296.stm>
- Racism in Modern Russia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism\\_in\\_modern\\_Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism_in_modern_Russia)
- Putin faces up to racist scourge - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4755163.stm>
- Why are you here, Mr. Nigger?' - <http://plato.acadiau.ca/COURSES/POLS/Grieve/3593/Russia/racism04.html>

## Spain

Students have said that Spaniards first identify them by their ethnic background. For example, if a Chinese-American student does not say anything, he/she would be first perceived as Chinese. Once the student starts speaking they will be immediately regarded as American first, not by the ethnic background.

Spaniards' views are based on stereotypes that are seen in movies and TV programming. For these reasons, some students have encountered problems with hailing a taxi or getting charged more for a motel room (or outright refusal). In recent years Spain has had large-scale illegal immigration coming from parts of Africa, which has led people to have ill feelings towards dark-skinned people.

- Students of Color Abroad - <http://web.utk.edu/%7Eglobe/pao/diversity.php>

Students Experience Spain - <http://www.virginia.edu/insideuva/2004/14/spain.html>

## Switzerland

The Swiss have a relatively relaxed attitude towards race-based jokes. Students studying in

Switzerland commonly interpret this as either enhanced xenophobia or a release from stifling political correctness.

The Swiss are a relatively homogenous people, but the documented incidents of racism are relatively low. The majority of these documented cases tend to be aimed at Jews.

- UN envoy calls racism in Switzerland a reality - <http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/index.html?siteSect=106&sid=6382785>
- Racism in Switzerland - <http://www.humanrights.ch/home/en/Switzerland/Policy/Racism/content.html>

### Tanzania

As in Kenya, Tanzanians feel the brunt of American foreign policy and feel free to express their views about Americans. Whether you are white or African-American, you will be regarded first as an American (and often as a representative of official American policy). The situation is somewhat exacerbated because of Tanzania's high percentage of Muslims, who feel particularly targeted by the US's perceived hatred towards Muslims.

- From Race to Citizenship: The Indigenization Debate in Post-Socialist Tanzania - <http://www.springerlink.com/content/2ykh3qnbtd46g637/>

### Thailand

In Thailand, like most countries, a certain level of racism persists. This is usually towards darker-skinned people, which can include foreigners and rural Thais alike. Intense incidents of outright racism are rarely seen. Some travelers have noticed double pricing or plain refusal to stay in a hotel.

Asian-Americans might encounter racial prejudices as well. This is especially true if the student has Chinese ancestry, and stems from historical perceptions of the Chinese.

- Racism in Thailand? - <http://www.bangkokrecorder.com/blog/bangkok-blog/racism-in-thailand-930.html>
- Racism Against Blacks in Thailand - <http://www.stickmanbangkok.com/reader/reader615.html>
- Asian Racism in Thailand - <http://asianracism.blogspot.com/2007/10/asian-racism-in-thailand.html>
- The color of fame in Thailand - <http://whatismatt.com/thailand-fame-racism>

## RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

We hope students will return from studying abroad with a greater understanding of, respect for, and appreciation of world religions. The best way you can prepare for inevitable discussions about religion is to inform yourself about the prevalent religions in your host country and their styles of practice. You may even discover a new thing or two about your own beliefs while you are abroad!

### China

Chinese society and culture has been influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Other religious minorities that exist are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism,

Dongbaism, Bon, Xiantianism and Falun Gong. However, most Chinese consider themselves as non-religious.

The Chinese government and Communist Party officials have pressured certain religious groups. The government tends to link the use of religion to political activity. Many outspoken religious members have been singled out as damaging to the government and punished. The standards of religious freedom have often been compromised, especially in the autonomous region of Tibet.

The Chinese authorities are involved in a continuous crackdown on Catholics and Protestants around China. Communism is still the official ideology of the country and any other is viewed as a threat to Chinese national security. One Bible per person (for personal use) is allowed into the country, thereby reducing the potential for unwanted evangelization.

- China: Religious Persecution Persists - <http://www.hrw.org/summaries/s.china9512.html>
- Religion in China - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_China)
- Falun Gong - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falun\\_Gong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falun_Gong)
- Bible Smuggling Religious persecution in China. - <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-noonan012302.shtml>
- Papers 'reveal' Chinese religious persecution - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/1815231.stm>

### Ecuador & Latin America

Most of populations of Mexico and Ecuador are Roman Catholic. With the early colonization of Latin America, Catholic missionaries came to spread the Catholic faith. Other religious faiths have a small followings in the country, such as Mormonism, Protestantism, Judaism and Islam. Although Mexico does not have an official religion, approximately 95% of the people self-identify as Catholic. Many social and cultural norms are linked to the strict belief system of Christianity. Ecuador has similar percentages, and is known for its religious tolerance of other faiths.

- Religion in Mexico - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Mexico)
- Solutions Abroad.com: Religion in Mexico - [http://www.solutionsabroad.com/a\\_religionmexico.asp](http://www.solutionsabroad.com/a_religionmexico.asp)
- Latin American Studies: Religion in Mexico - <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/mexico-religion.htm>
- Country Studies: Mexico - <http://countrystudies.us/mexico/61.htm>
- Islam Takes Root in Mexico - <http://www.racematters.org/islamtakesrootinmexico.htm>
- Jews of Mexico - <http://haruth.com/jw/JewsMexico.html>
- Jewish Resources: Mexico - <http://www.hareshima.com/Regional/mexico.asp>
- Religion in Ecuador - [http://atheism.about.com/library/world/AJ/bl\\_EcuadorReligion.htm](http://atheism.about.com/library/world/AJ/bl_EcuadorReligion.htm)
- Kosher Delight: Ecuador - <http://www.kosherdelight.com/Ecuador.shtml>
- Jews of Ecuador - <http://www.haruth.com/JewsEquadoreHist.html>
- Islam in Ecuador - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Ecuador](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Ecuador)
- Islamic Center: Ecuador - <http://www.centroislamico.org.ec/>

### England

With over 170 distinct religions counted in the 2001 Census, the religious make-up of the UK is diverse, complex, multicultural and surprising. Less than half of the British people believe in a

God, yet about 72% told the 2001 census that they were Christian, and 66% of the population has no actual connection to any religion or church, despite what they tend to write down on official forms. Religion in Britain has been on a decline since the 1950s, and British society continues to become more secular. While there is discrimination against certain groups, this discrimination is based more on ethnic affiliation rather than religion.

- Religious discrimination in England - <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/religiousdiscrimination>

## France

Unlike the United States, which was founded on the idea that each individual is free to express his religion as he sees fit, contemporary France insists that religion is a purely private matter and has no place interfering in the public sphere. French young people, even those who are religious, can get surprisingly insistent on the matter.

The concept of *laïcité* is a difficult one to translate into English. Technically it means "lay" as opposed to "clergy," but the concept stretches much further than that. *Laïcité* is the entire and abrupt separation of church and state, and is mentioned in the very first sentence of the French constitution. The *loi Ferry* establishing the secular nature of French school and government, dates to 1905. In French schools and government offices, this means that no person is allowed to wear any outward signs of religious adhesion, including crucifixes, yarmulkes, turbans or (most controversially) Muslim headscarves, for fear of proselytizing or influencing schoolchildren or citizens. Religion is only taught in schools in a historical context, if at all.

While a large majority of French people describe themselves as Roman Catholic, only a very small percentage actually attend services on weeks other than Christmas or Easter. (In keeping with its non-discriminatory policies, the French government does not keep official records on religious adherence, ethnicity or political affiliation.) Protestantism is mostly concentrated in the southwest and eastern portions of France. Islam is growing quickly, much too quickly for some right-wing parties, and the headscarf debate perennially leads newspaper headlines.

After atheism, Catholicism, Islam, and Protestantism, Judaism is the next largest religion in France. From the Crusades to ghettoization to the Dreyfus Affair in the early 1900s to Vichy government collusion with the Holocaust, Jews have largely been discriminated against. Currently, however, France has the largest Jewish population in Europe, largely because of the *pid-noirs*, French Jews who fled to Algeria during WWII and then moved back afterwards. The term, while not exactly pejorative, is not entirely complimentary either.

- Religion in France - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_France)
- *Laïcité* -
- France: Headscarf Ban Violates Religious Freedom - <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2004/02/26/france7666.htm>
- Jules Ferry Biography - [http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ferry\\_Jules.html](http://www.biographybase.com/biography/Ferry_Jules.html)
- Mosquée de Paris - <http://www.mosquee-de-paris.org/>
- Pied-noir - <http://lexicorient.com/e.o/pied-noir.htm>

## Ireland

Students will find Ireland a very welcoming place for people of all religious faiths. Discrimination based on religion is rarely experienced. Religious diversity has expanded into

the realm of politics in recent years, with representatives in government coming from different religions. One of the fastest-growing religious faiths in the country is Islam. This is due in part to the sudden increase in immigration.

Nevertheless, Roman Catholicism still remains the number one religion in Ireland, accounting for approximately 90% of the population. Ireland presently has the largest percentage of churchgoers in Europe. Other religions include Islam, Judaism, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Eastern Orthodox.

- Religion in the Republic of Ireland - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_Republic_of_Ireland)
- Islam in Ireland - <http://www.islaminireland.com/>
- The Muslim Survival Guide for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - <http://www.iol.ie/%7Eafifi/BIC/guide.htm>
- Church of Ireland - <http://www.ireland.anglican.org/>
- Ireland's Jews: A Fading Tribe on the Emerald Isle - <http://www.isjm.org/jhr/lnos1-2/ireland.htm>
- Jewish Ireland - <http://www.jewishireland.org/>
- Jews in Ireland - <http://haruth.com/jw/JewsIreland.html>

## India

Religion has been an important part of India's history and culture. The vast majority of Indians associate themselves with a religion. Eighty percent of the population is Hindu; thirteen percent is Muslim; Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism account for less than five percent; and two percent of Indians adhere to Christianity. Zoroastrianism and Judaism also have an ancient history in India and each has several thousand Indian adherents.

Though inter-religious marriage is not widely practiced, Indians are generally tolerant of other religions and retain a secular outlook. The Constitution of India declares the nation to be a secular republic that must uphold the right of citizens to freely worship and propagate any religion or faith. India's religious diversity extends to the highest levels of government.

While inter-community clashes have occurred, is generally perceived that the causes of religious conflicts are political rather than ideological in nature.

- Religion in India - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_India)
- Religions of India - <http://www.journeymart.com/dexplorer/asiains/india/culturalheritage/religion.asp>
- Jews in India - <http://adaniel.tripod.com/jews.htm>
- Change Comes Slowly for Religious Diversity in India - <http://www.prb.org/Articles/2009/indiareligions.aspx>

## Italy

People from all types of religious faiths call Italy their home. Italy does not have an official religion, but freedom of religion is guaranteed under the Constitution. Although a large percentage of the population self-identifies as Roman Catholic, many do not practice it. Italy is home to Eastern Orthodox Christians, Greek Orthodox, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Waldensians, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, Baptists, Lutherans and

Methodists. Some Asian religions have also made their way to Italy, including Buddhism, Sikh and Hinduism.

- Roman Catholic in Italy - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholicism\\_in\\_Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Italy)
- Buddhism in Italy - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_in\\_Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_Italy)
- Italian Buddhist Union - <http://www.buddhismo.it/ente.htm>
- Islam in Italy - <http://www.answers.com/topic/islam-in-italy>
- Jews in Italy - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews\\_in\\_Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews_in_Italy)
- Jewish Italy - <http://www.jewishitaly.org/>
- Islam & Muslims in Italy - [\\192.168.2.222\pub\AllShare\NEWWeb\students\www.islamawareness.net\Europe\Italy](http://192.168.2.222/pub/AllShare/NEWWeb/students/www.islamawareness.net/Europe/Italy)

## Kenya

Individuals are free to practice their chosen religion in Kenya. The Kenyan Constitution guarantees religious freedom. Controversy has continued in political affairs as Muslims claim that the government is hostile towards Muslims. The largest religious group is composed of Protestants.

The second largest group is the Roman Catholics, followed by Muslims. Other religious faiths include Hinduism and various traditional indigenous religions or offshoots of Christianity. The various religious groups tend to be propagated in different parts of the country. The areas bordering Somalia are mostly Muslim.

Missionaries brought to Kenya the practices of Evangelical Protestants, Southern Baptist Church, Pentecostal Assembly, and the Church Missionary Society of Britain.

- International Religious Freedom Report: Kenya - <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71307.htm>
- Islam Kenya - <http://www.islamkenya.com/>
- Islam in Kenya - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Kenya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Kenya)
- Islam and Politics in Kenya - [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa4106/is\\_200309/ai\\_n9241291](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4106/is_200309/ai_n9241291)
- The Jews of Africa - <http://www.mindspring.com/%7Ejaypsand/index.htm>
- Jewish Kenya - <http://www.haruth.com/jw/JewsKenya.htm>
- Kenyan Churches - <http://www.kenyachurches.org/>

## Russia

A large percentage of the Russian population is Russian Orthodox. Other religious faiths present in Russia are Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism and Judaism.

The Russian constitution provides for the freedom of religion and expression. However, abuses and discrimination based on religious belief or practice have been reported throughout the country. The rights of some minority religious groups have been restricted when seen as a threat to national security.

- Religion in Russia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Russia)
- Muslims in Russia - [http://www.rferl.org/features/features\\_Article.aspx?m=07&y=2005&id=B7D5E783-749F-4E6A-B77E-8932ECE7AD53](http://www.rferl.org/features/features_Article.aspx?m=07&y=2005&id=B7D5E783-749F-4E6A-B77E-8932ECE7AD53)

- Russia: International Religious Freedom Report - <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90196.htm>
- Islam in Russia - [http://atheism.about.com/library/world/KZ/bl\\_RussiaIslam.htm](http://atheism.about.com/library/world/KZ/bl_RussiaIslam.htm)
- The rise of Russian Muslims worries Orthodox Church - <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article551693.ece>
- Buddhism in Russia - <http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/world/country/028-russia.htm>

## Spain

Spain has no state religion. Although most of population self-identifies as Roman Catholic, many do not practice or consider themselves religious. Other religious groups represented are Protestantism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism and Judaism. The Spanish Constitution provides for freedom of religion.

Students are free to practice their faith of choice during their stay in Spain. Barcelona has many churches, temples and mosques to cater to all religious faiths. Students will find themselves attending school with students from all religious backgrounds.

- International Religious Freedom Report: Spain - <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51582.htm>
- Spain: Five Hundred Years and Religious Freedom - [http://forerunner.com/forerunner/X0844\\_Spain\\_-\\_500\\_Years\\_\\_F.html](http://forerunner.com/forerunner/X0844_Spain_-_500_Years__F.html)
- Freedom of religion in the case law of the Spanish Constitutional court - [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3736/is\\_200101/ai\\_n8950497](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3736/is_200101/ai_n8950497)
- Islam in Spain - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Spain)
- European Muslim Union - <http://www.emunion.org/>
- Islamic Barcelona - <http://www.barcelona-metropolitan.com/Article.aspx?TabID=2&MenuID=2&ArticleID=524>
- Jewish Barcelona - [http://www.bcn.es/turisme/english/turisme/rutes/jueva\\_fr.htm](http://www.bcn.es/turisme/english/turisme/rutes/jueva_fr.htm)

## Switzerland

Traditionally a Christian country, Switzerland's famous neutrality drew controversial religious figures to seek refuge there. Ulrich Zwingli converted most of the German-speaking areas to Protestantism within a few years in the 1500's. At about the same time, John Calvin also managed to establish his strict form of Calvinism in Geneva. Mennonites in America today are essentially the descendants of the Swiss Anabaptists, a strict sect Protestants that practiced adult (versus infant) baptism.

Today Switzerland's constitution guarantees freedom of worship. In addition to the many Catholic and Protestant churches, there is a mosque in Geneva and one in Zurich, as well as many prayer rooms. Most Swiss Jews live in or around Zurich.

- Religions in Switzerland - <http://www.all-about-switzerland.info/swiss-religions.html>
- Other religions in Switzerland - [http://www.swissworld.org/en/people/religion/other\\_religions/](http://www.swissworld.org/en/people/religion/other_religions/)
- Anabaptists - <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01445b.htm>
- Swiss Tamils look to preserve their culture - <http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/swissinfo.html?siteSect=108&sid=6186723&cKey=1140784868000>

## Tanzania

The two predominant religions in Tanzania are Christianity and Islam. Each religion encompasses a roughly equal number of adherents; 40-45% for Christianity and 35-40% for Islam. Some religious minorities include Hindus, Sikhs and Ismailis. Most of inland areas are Christian while Islam is largely practiced in the coastal areas and along the old caravan routes. Religion is taken very seriously in the country. Religious holidays are celebrated throughout the year. Easter, Christmas and the lunar month of Ramadan are major events in Tanzania.

- Islam in Tanzania - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam\\_in\\_Tanzania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Tanzania)
- When You Are the Only Jew for Miles Around - <http://mahlersonsafari.blogspot.com/2006/06/when-you-are-only-jew-for-miles-around.html>
- Islam Tanzania - <http://www.igs.net/%7Ekassim/>
- African Islam in Tanzania - <http://www.islamfortoday.com/tanzania.htm>
- Catholic Hierarchy Tanzania - <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/tz.html>
- Hindus Stand Strong In Ancient Tanzania - <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/archives/1996/2/1996-2-05.shtml>
- Buddhism, Tanzania Buddhist temple and present difficulties - [http://www.vesakday.net/vesak49/article/pdf/Buddhism\\_in\\_Africa.pdf](http://www.vesakday.net/vesak49/article/pdf/Buddhism_in_Africa.pdf)

## Thailand

Thailand is a predominantly Buddhist country. Theravada Buddhism is the state religion and the major sect of Thailand. Religious tolerance exists within the country towards Muslims, Confucianists, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and Jews.

Freedom of worship allows people to practice without the fear of ethnic or racial discrimination. There is a wide array of places of worship throughout Bangkok.

- Buddhism in Thailand - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_in\\_Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_Thailand)
- Religion - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism\\_in\\_Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_Thailand)
- Religion in Thailand - <http://www.hellosiam.com/html/thailand/thailand-religion.htm>
- Country Studies: Thailand - Religion - <http://countrystudies.us/thailand/53.htm>
- Christianity in Thailand - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_in\\_Thailand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Thailand)

## PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

KEI is committed to giving all students the opportunity to study abroad. Before making a decision on where you wish to study abroad, you should do some research as to what destinations will fulfill your individual needs.

Students with disabilities are asked to inform KEI early during the application process. KEI will do its best to accommodate your request. If your specific request cannot be reasonably accommodated in your chosen program destination due to the host country's or university's infrastructure or resources, KEI advisors can help you choose a location that will let you succeed to your fullest potential.

## Africa (Kenya, Tanzania)

In recent years, there has been a change in attitudes towards individuals with physical

disabilities and a movement to give more representation in society and culture. Although advocacy groups are working on more resources, things such as access ramps are still rare.

#### **Asia** (China, Thailand, India)

Asian communities tend to be caring towards people with disabilities on an individual and collective level. Nevertheless, students must be aware that facilities are not always handicapped accessible. Unlike the ADA in the United States, many countries have limited laws protecting people with disabilities.

#### **Latin America** (Ecuador)

Students with disabilities will find Latin America very welcoming. Although accessibility might sometimes be very scarce, people tend to be extremely helpful in assisting others. Many large cities have resources available for students with disabilities.

#### **Europe** (France, England, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Switzerland)

In general, students with disabilities will integrate fairly easily during the study period in Europe. European countries have laws and regulations to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Many public facilities are handicapped-accessible and students will find that it is relatively easy to get around.

Despite laws assuring accessibility, Russia still has a long way to go compared to its Western European neighbors. Although some large cities are starting to make progress it still relatively difficult to get around for people with physical disability.

- Global Access - <http://www.globalaccessnews.com/>
- Information for Students with Disabilities - <http://www.abilityinfo.com/>
- Global Access - <http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/access/>
- Access Abroad - University of Minnesota /Information for Students with Disabilities - <http://www.globalaccessnews.com/>
- Mobility International - <http://www.miusa.org/>
- Transitions Abroad - <http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/disability/>

## **GLBTO STUDENTS**

GLBTO students usually have spent quite a bit of time struggling with identity issues in their lives, and are excellent candidates for study abroad. The time spent abroad may be a time for experimenting, redefining yourself, developing a positive GLBTO identity and breaking from old expectations.

However, every culture around the world has a different level of tolerance for GLBTO issues and rules for defining sexual identity. In some places, habits that you would find perfectly normal are considered totally inappropriate, and vice versa. Every GLBTO student is an individual with individual issues and memories, and no two students will have the same experience, but many GLBTO students report facing a different set of challenges in "blending in" than straight students. Being knowledgeable about your identity and host country will help you have a safe and rewarding international experience.

#### **Western Europe** (England, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Spain, Italy)

LGBT students will find Western Europe to be a very welcoming environment. While there are

some individuals that view homosexuality as immoral, in general, Western European countries are tolerant of sexual orientation and alternative lifestyles. Most countries have anti-discrimination laws protecting the GLBTO community.

The GLBTO community enjoys much greater acceptance than most countries outside of Europe. Belgium became the second country in the world to legally recognize same-sex marriage. Following this trend, same-sex marriage became legal in Spain in 2005.

### **Easter Europe (Russia)**

Article 121 in the Russia's constitution, which criminalize gay sex, was finally repealed in 1993. The collapse of the Soviet Union accelerated the progress of the gay movement, and the GLBTO community is slowly opening up in large urban areas such as Moscow. Russia at the present time has neither legislation against gay people nor anti-discrimination laws. Just like in China, Russia no longer deems homosexuality a mental illness. Students should still be wary as open homosexual sexuality is often seen as a sin. Most of the resistance comes from different religious groups that see it as attack on morality.

### **Asia (China, India, Thailand)**

Although there are large gay communities in China, homosexuality is technically illegal and Chinese face overwhelming social pressures to remain closeted. Students should be aware of the pressure that locals face. Therefore it is important that students respect the person's right to decide where, when and how to participate in a gay lifestyle. This does not mean that gay bars and meeting places do not exist. Due to the increased exposure to foreign attitudes, social norms are slowly changing. Only in the early 2000's did China delist homosexuality from list of mental illnesses. Still most Chinese prefer hide their sexuality for 3 main reasons:

- fear of being ostracized by their community, family, etc.
- fear of being fired
- family pressures to get married and have children (important duty for a man in traditional Chinese society)

There have been efforts, especially through the Internet, to give voice to the GLBTO community and to spread awareness. There is a continuous effort to teach tolerance and understanding which has shown some progress in recent years.

"We don't have any," is the classic Indian response to homosexuality in India. Indians say this even when they know of and generally tolerate homosexual acts in their communities.

On 2 July 2009, a Delhi High Court ruling decriminalized homosexual intercourse between consenting adults. However, homosexuality remains a taboo subject. In recent years, attitudes towards homosexuality have shifted slightly. There have been more depictions and discussions of homosexuality in the news and by Bollywood.

Thailand currently does not have any laws prohibiting homosexuality. The overall attitude towards homosexuality seems to be mixture of tolerance, ignorance and evasion: generally accepted but not discussed within families. The community rarely faces open discrimination but most Thai people opt not to speak about it. This has prevented the GLBTO community from organizing and promoting programs for the community. Social norms consider the topic of sex as a taboo.

Thailand is renowned for its gay scene, but this largely caters to the tourist industry. Western travelers often take notice of the "ladyboys". They are generally accepted by society, and considered a third gender. The homosexual gender role is often seen in the effeminate *gà'tuhy* of Thailand.

### Latin America (Ecuador)

The population of Latin America is predominantly Roman Catholic. Due to the strict religious views of morality, most choose to ignore that a GLBTO community exists or prefer to believe that it is just a phase. Most of the population is still against GLBTO rights to marriage. Although attention to the topics of sexuality is growing, it tends to be something people do not discuss. Most gay places of business remain discreet and often unmarked.

The culture does not openly accept different lifestyles, but rather assigns specific gender roles. This is where the term *machismo* developed, meaning "a strong sense of masculine pride: an exaggerated masculinity".

### Africa (Kenya, Tanzania)

Homosexuality remains illegal in Kenya and a taboo subject in Kenyan society. It is often seen as a perversion brought in by the Western powers. Only a small part of the Kenya's population feel that GLBTO individuals should be accepted by society.

Although rarely enforced, punishment in Kenya for gay sex is five to 14 years in jail. Individuals remain closeted or live double lives due to the suppression. Most of the openly gay community in Nairobi is confined to Western expatriates.

Under the Penal Code in Tanzania, homosexuality is against the law. No clauses of equality and non discrimination exist under the constitution. Homosexual acts carry long jail sentences. Christian and Muslims groups are in opposition to any gay rights movement. Most Tanzanians believe homosexuality to be a un-African practice. Usually it is blamed on Westerners and brought in a part of colonialism. Homosexuality remains a taboo subject.

Not all countries in Africa share the political and cultural views of Kenya and Tanzania. The South African constitution was the world's first to enshrine equal rights for gays and lesbians. It was the 5th country in the world and first in Africa to legalize same-sex marriages. However, a large percentage of the population still believes homosexuality is immoral.

### Online Resources

- Advising GLBT Students Heading to Asia - <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Eoverseas/lesbigay/studentsasia.html>
- International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission - <http://www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc>
- Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group - <http://www.indiana.edu/%7Eoverseas/lesbigay/student.htm>
- Gay and Lesbian Travel & Resource Guide - <http://www.gaymart.com/5persorg/6city/targ.html>

### Books

- *Are You Two... Together?: A Gay and Lesbian Travel Guide to Europe* by Lindsay Van Gelder and Pamela Brandt, Random House, 1991.
- *Out in the World: Gay and Lesbian Life from Buenos Aires to Bangkok* by Neil Miller, 1992.
- *Sexual Orientation and Identity: Heterosexual, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Journeys* by Heather Pierce and Carol Wishik, 1995.
- *The Third Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression* by Art Hendricks, 1993.
- *The World Out There: Becoming Part of the Gay and Lesbian Community* by Michael Ford, 1996.

## FEMALE STUDENTS

All over the world, female travelers have a different experience than male travelers. Many countries have very traditional customs and norms that govern how men and women interact. One common assumption, ably fueled by movies and television, is that American women are "easy." Men in these countries will treat American women in ways that they would not dream of treating "their own" women. While you may not agree with local customs, you should learn to respect and follow the laws and social norms of the host country. In addition, you should...

- Research the norms governing social behavior in the host country before the program.
- Ask local women what the line between harassment and regular "machismo" action is, and how they usually handle catcalls or touching.
- Unless you are particularly looking for an encounter, do not look males directly in the eye in certain countries.
- Dress in clothes that blend in with the locals.
- Don't ask strangers for help. If you need help, ask an authority figure, a woman or a couple.
- Look confident, even when you may not be.
- Avoid unsafe neighborhoods and places. Trust your gut about what is safe and unsafe.
- Avoid carrying mace with you unless you are absolutely certain that it is necessary, and that carrying it is not in violation of the laws of the country in which you are traveling.
- Carry condoms with you and insist on using them. If your partner resists, it's not worth risking your life.
- *At no point should you ever consume enough alcohol or drugs to lose awareness of your surroundings or consciousness.*

### Northern Europe (England, France, Ireland, Switzerland, Russia)

Men in Northern Europe generally keep their distance, but as always, a direct look in the eye and a smile can invite unwanted attention. Take care to dress fashionably, but a bit more cautiously than you normally would when going to clubs and discos.

### Southern Europe (France, Italy, Spain)

Mediterranean men are quite forward and known to call out to women on the street. Unless you are interested in meeting someone, it's best to avoid eye contact. If you feel that a man is being too friendly, you can give them a look, say "Leave me alone!" in the local language and keep walking purposefully.

### Latin America (Ecuador)

The problem that women most often notice is cat-calling and whistling. This is very commonplace and stems from *machismo*, or the idea of showcasing a man's masculinity. The portrayal of American women on television does not improve the common assumption that American females invite propositions.

### Africa (Kenya, Tanzania)

Females should dress conservatively. Longer skirts and long sleeves may be necessary in predominantly Muslim countries. Many Muslim women wear a headscarf by choice.

### Asia (China, India, Thailand)

In Thailand, it is disrespectful to touch women in public, even on the hand. Decent attire is required in Buddhist temples. Women must never touch a saffron-robed monk or ride next to him in a car. Men and women should keep their heads below the monk's head, walk slightly behind him, and bow out of respect.

Chinese culture allows for more provocative clothing in the cities, as long as you are neat and clean. Chinese men are deferential to women, although you should still be vigilant at all times.

India culture is rather conservative in relation to dress. In general, women in India have more equality to men than in other Asian societies. However, Westerners should be weary of men groping them in public places.

### Online Resources

- *Cross-Cultural Adaptation Among Women* - <http://sistergoldenhair.com/uponarrival/research.html>
- *Journey Woman: Dress* - <http://www.journeywoman.com/ccg/default.html#women%20clothing>
- *University of Michigan International Center Women Abroad Guide* - [http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/swt/study/women\\_abroad.html](http://www.internationalcenter.umich.edu/swt/study/women_abroad.html)
- *U.S. State Dept. Travel Tips for Women* - [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html#special\\_planning](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#special_planning)
- *Women Travelers* - <http://www.ricksteves.com/graffiti/graffiti4.html>

### Books & Articles

- *Go Girl! The Black Woman's Book of Travel and Adventure* by Elaine Lee, Eighth Mountain Press, 1997.
- *More Women Travel: Adventures and Advice from More than 60 Countries* by M. Davies and N. Jansz, Rough Guide Series, 1995.
- *Nothing to Declare* by Mary Morris, Penguin Books, 1991.
- *Safety and Security for Women Who Travel* by Sheila Swan & Peter Laufer, Traveller's Tales Inc., 1998.
- *Solo Woman Traveler*, Transitions Abroad Publishing, 1996.
- "Study Abroad: A Competitive Edge for Women?" By S. Opper, *Oxford Review of Education*. 17(1) 45, 1991.
- *Traveler's Tales: A Woman's World* by Marybeth Bond, Traveller's Tales, Inc., 1995.
- *Wall to Wall: From Beijing to Berlin* by Mary Morris, Penguin Books, 1991.

- *Women's Guide to Overseas Living* by N. J. Piet-Pelon & B. Hornby, Intercultural Press, 1992.
- *Women on the Move: A Christian Perspective on Cross-Cultural Adaptation* by G. Jansen, Intercultural Press, 1989.