

## FILLING THE GAP IN GAP YEAR

*Now that taking a gap year has independently travelled into the consciousness of young people and educators in the USA, isn't it time you got to know the industry that provides these opportunities.*

Research conducted by WYSE Travel Confederation and the United Nations World Tourism Organization point out that young people in ever-increasing numbers are looking to get away, learn and experience. In other words, the demand for cultural exchange- the essential purpose of a gap year, is growing, especially in the USA.

Media from the N.Y. Times to USA Today have been raving about the rising popularity of gap year programmes in the United States. Volunteering and community service - gap year staples, have exploded in popularity over the past few years. In addition to universities and global business, with the integration of intern and work experience programmes, also jumping into the gap year mix.

### **Gap year – just a slice in the \$136 billion youth, student and educational travel pie\***

A simple online search for “gap years” turns up some 15 million pages. Of these, there are more than enough opportunities for young people. The question however might be how many of them are legitimate organisations with quality-controlled programmes.

At the World Youth and Student Travel Conference (WYSTC), you will find a number of the organisations from the “gap year” search. From start-ups like Troy Peden from GoAbroad.com to youth and student travel industry veterans like Anders Åhlund of EF International Language Schools, the market's key players attend the conference. The important difference is that unlike the internet search, the organisations that attend WYSTC must meet business and trading standards.

Taking place in Brooklyn, New York this September, the WYSTC conference not only delivers cutting-edge industry intelligence on the market with a full day seminar programme, it provides the global youth, student and educational travel industry with its only true b2b trade market. Bringing the entire industry that serves young people, from schools to hostels to work abroad programmes, together under one roof to do business. For organisations looking to find the partners and expertise to develop Gap Year programmes, WYSTC can provide the answer.

“This year, we see a tremendous opportunity for attending organisations to partner and develop cross-sector programmes to meet both the international demand for travel & study opportunities in the states, but also for US students increasingly wanting to go abroad,” says WYSTC director Susan Goldstein. Adding, “With gap year programmes becoming more and more the vogue in the US and Washington's warming up to international education: the time is right to take advantage of WYSTC.”

The conference takes place at the New York Marriot at the Brooklyn Bridge, 13-17 September 2008. [www.wystc.org](http://www.wystc.org)

### **About WYSTC**

Now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, the World Youth and Student Travel Conference is the signature event for the WYSE Travel Confederation and a must attend summit for key stakeholders, professionals and organisations in youth, student and educational travel. The conference connects the diverse markets that serve today's young travellers and students for a focused forum of seminars, networking and trade.

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*\*Youth Travel Matters – Understanding the Global Phenomenon of Youth Travel by UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation*