

IFE - CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

What follows is the specific crisis management plan for a crisis occurring in a city where IFE holds one of its programs. IFE is aware however that crisis events happening in the same country, or nearby country may cause anxiety and fear among students or parents. In such cases IFE provides resources of support to students who may be affected as well as sources of information to students, their parents and their home universities.

I. ORIENTATION AND PREPARATION

A - Communications:

- Students should be urged to enroll with STEP (Smart Travel Enrollment Programs) upon their arrival in Europe.
- During orientation, students are instructed in IFE emergency response protocol, their role and responsibilities, and are given common sense guidelines for staying safe and staying informed.
- Each student (in any IFE semester program) shall be obligated to procure a local cell phone number within 10 days of the beginning of the program. Program directors must be able to contact students using a local (French or Belgian) mobile telephone number. Non-compliance will result in disciplinary action including dismissal from the program. Reminder: this obligation has been added to the language-and-behavior contract each student signs at the beginning of their IFE program.
- IFE shall record students' local cell phone number in the IFE database, and all staff members shall enter each student's number into their personal cell phones and create an SMS group containing all numbers.
- A list of student numbers shall be distributed to all students as well.
- A facebook group shall be created by program and by city, managed by IFE.
- Important: a simulation exercise must be conducted in each city at the end of the second week of a semester. The following text shall be messaged to the student group and is posted on the group Facebook:

“This is a simulation of an emergency situation. Respond immediately to this message stating where you are and whether you are safe. Give the names of any other IFE students who are with you and indicate whether they are safe.”

Student responses shall be noted and any non-respondents will be called to account.

Each IFE staff member shall have this text stored on their cell phone.

- Personal travel on weekends: it is not feasible (nor necessarily desirable from a pedagogical standpoint) to keep detailed track of student movement at all times. Nevertheless IFE must, for all students, insist upon the need for security precautions including...
 - their informing IFE by email or text message when they leave their host city;
 - that if they are away from their host city at the time that a crisis (terrorist attack, natural or human-caused disaster) breaks out anywhere in Europe it is essential that they contact IFE staff immediately with information about their whereabouts and wellbeing;
 - that if a crisis erupts in another city or country where they know one or more of their classmates to be traveling that they inform IFE immediately.

B - Information:

Before a crisis occurs:

- IFE staff members are to maintain good practices in staying informed in a general way including regular use of local and reliable sources to stay abreast of events, trends and issues. IFE staff members will encourage students to develop similar habits.

When a crisis occurs:

- IFE staff members shall rely most heavily on such local and reliable sources for breaking information and least heavily on international sources and especially US commercial-based cable news sources.

- IFE staff members shall be sensitive to the possibility that family members at home, in their efforts to understand what is happening far away, may be exposed to sensationalist media sources and/or information relayed incessantly throughout the day, and may as a result be even more prone to anxiety.

- IFE staff members will keep in mind that it is the student - as a locally engaged individual -- who will be able to draw on their knowledge and local experience to reassure and inform family members.

- IFE staff members shall be available to students at all times and wherever needed: at IFE centers, on-site any where in each city, or by telephone and email.

- IFE staff members shall be ready to refer students to appropriate sources of medical and/or psychological help in the event of crisis.

- Before and during crisis IFE will communicate these points to its students.

C - Specific precautionary measures:

- all IFE staff members shall have their telephone with them at all times, charged and activated.
- all IFE staff members shall know local emergency numbers (police, medical emergency, fire,...)
- in IFE group situations, IFE staff members shall pay attention to emergency exits and other forms of egress.

II. DETERMINING THE NATURE OF THE CRISIS AND EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF RISK

DEFINITION: IFE defines 'crisis' as any situation of collective danger requiring rapid response to ensure the safety and well-being of a group or part of a group. Examples include terrorist attack, natural disaster, human-caused disaster, political or social unrest, epidemic, drastic measures taken by public authorities in the face of real or perceived dangers, among others.

INFORMATION SOURCES:

- Local media sources and information from public administrations. IFE favors the most neutral media sources (e.g.: iTélé, Le Monde) available locally as well as information relayed by the social media of the Ministry of the Interior.
- "IFE" sources: specialists in international, strategic, and sociological issues, as well representatives of public administrations, among IFE's network of local partners.
- American sources: US State Department and American embassies. The Warden Warning System which evaluates phenomena of disinformation or exaggeration.
- Risk managers and safety officials at IFE partner schools in the US.
- OPAC recommendations.
- The APUAF community network (Professional Association of American University Programs in France).

Drawing on all of these sources enables IFE leadership to determine the appropriate response as described below.

III. IMMEDIATE REPONSES TO CRISIS OUTBREAK

A. Locally

- IFE contacts all students by telephone (voice or text) and by internet (email, social media). IFE local directors in IFE cities are responsible for

contacting their student cohort while also maintaining constant contact with IFE leadership.

- Likely scenario:

1. News of crisis breaks. IFE leadership (Tim Carlson, Thomas Roman) consult to determine the distribution of tasks and then contact local directors to begin the process of contacting and helping each city's student group. If the crisis breaks out in Brussels or Strasbourg, local directors contact IFE leadership to confirm the protocol to be followed.

***IMPORTANT:** If after a few minutes following breaking news of a crisis, either one of IFE's directors has not heard from the other, or if local directors have not heard from IFE leadership, then they are to begin taking charge of operations.*

2. Responses from students in each group are recorded and efforts to contact students are sustained until all are accounted for. Confirmations shall be noted by group but also according to home university so that the latter can be notified in real time of safety confirmation. The message disseminated to students shall resemble that of the simulation exercise (see I.A above). It shall also include a strong exhortation for students to be in contact with family and loved ones, providing reassurance and information.
3. In the case of difficulty establishing contact with a student, IFE staff members shall contact the student's housing situation and/or internship site as well as asking other students for news of the student not heard from.
4. Once all student safety has been confirmed, and home universities and parents contacted (see below), follow-up contact with students shall be initiated to determine their sense of well-being, to reiterate IFE staff availability including the opening of IFE centers, and to offer various forms of help and therapy (informal discussion, therapy options, relaxation activities, etc).
5. As a general rule, IFE leadership will not convoke students to mandatory meetings or discussion sessions; IFE shall offer students a full range of support options without requiring participation. At their discretion, however, IFE leadership may require participation and cooperation in certain activities in response to a specific situation (e.g. lockdown and curfew in Brussels leading to mandatory two-day excursion to Antwerp to avoid isolation and crises of morale).
6. In the case of a student located near the site of a crisis IFE shall inform the student that IFE will underwrite any costs of and help organize any such transportation (taxi, train, etc) and/or lodging

such as are required to ensure the safety and security of the student.

7. In case of student trauma, injury or death during a time of crisis one member of IFE staff will concentrate exclusively on such a case. (If this case occurs in Brussels or Strasbourg, local directors will designate a teaching staff member to manage the student group and will concentrate solely on the case at hand.) IFE shall work as closely as possible with home university officials and local authorities, as well as the family, for all arrangements including medical, funerary, logistical, repatriation, and the like.

B. Relations with institutions and individuals in the US

HOME UNIVERSITIES

- IFE leadership shall establish contact with home university Study Abroad Offices for all current students, providing information on the safety and well-being of their students, as well as bulletins of IFE measures and actions.
- In the case of students not immediately located, IFE will contact the home universities of such students to open three-way communications among home university, parents and IFE so that the first to hear may inform the others. At the same time IFE will intensify local efforts to make contact with the student.
- In the case of a student victim, IFE shall contact home university officials to determine the protocols to follow and to offer full, strenuous cooperation with and aid to all home university officers.

PARENTS

- IFE guidelines for communications with parents:
 - It is IFE's fundamental policy to be careful with and concerned about respecting student individual dignity, privacy rights and adulthood. Direct contact with parents initiated by IFE is a very exceptional event. The IFE application file does however include an emergency contact email address and phone number, to be used for individual or group contact with parents, initiated by IFE.
 - In the case of serious injury or trauma IFE will immediately contact parents by telephone and email, at the same time that it contacts home university officials. In both cases IFE leadership will be available for communication and assistance on a 24/7 basis.

- In the case of serious risk of injury or threat to personal safety of a specific student or students or of all students in general (e.g. the attacks in Paris on 13 November, 2015), IFE will initiate contact with students' parents at the same time as contact with home university officials, for all students in the concerned city, assuring them of IFE's active contact and presence with their son or daughter.
- In less serious cases of direct physical risk (e.g. the Brussels lockdown), IFE shall issue a general email of reassurance and information to parents.
- IFE shall regularly insist with all students that they be in touch directly with family and loved ones to reassure them. IFE shall regularly insist that students encourage their parents to consult the crisis information section of IFE's website for useful information.
- IFE shall post regular, updated communiqués and other information, discussion, interviews and views on the crisis management section of the IFE website, and may issue general emails to parents notifying them of new communiqués and posts.
- IFE strongly discourages parental visits in the immediate aftermath of crisis outbreak. IFE encourages parents to consider that their best role is to reassure and encourage their son or daughter as they strive to re-establish normal routine. Parental encouragement from home can be a source of helpful comfort, whereby parental presence on site is almost certain to increase student anxiety.
- IFE strongly advises parents to re-establish their own routines as soon as possible and especially to avoid spending hours daily watching the news loop from Europe especially as provided by commercial media. IFE recommends to parents English-language sources of information for objective sober assessments of recent and unfolding events.
- IFE encourages parents to be in touch with IFE leadership including for any information or assessment which they find lacking in their own information sources.
- IFE reminds parents that the first 24 to 48 hours are dedicated to confirming student safety and ensuring student well-being. No decisions concerning program continuation, student withdrawal, credit, etc will be made during that period, and such questions should wait until the appropriate moment.

- Finally, IFE reminds parents that risk and fear require distinct management and response, and that various factors may increase fear but not risk, such as geographical distance, lack of cultural or contextual knowledge, or irresponsible sensationalist coverage.

IV. STEPS TO BE TAKEN POST-CRISIS

- For keeping students informed: IFE shall continue to provide information and sources of information as well as to sponsor reflection, debate and other means for students to generate their own thoughtful response to events. When possible and appropriate IFE will organize sessions with outside specialists as a form of “teach-in”. IFE emphasizes the potential role of knowledge and understanding in combating fear and unease. Students shall be encouraged to share such information and insights with their parents.

- For student well-being and comfort: In addition to an approach based on knowledge and understanding (above) IFE shall rely on professionally-generated guidelines and suggestions for reaching out to students individually and determining with them if stress and trauma reactions warrant further help and of what nature. IFE shall offer optional discussion sessions presented to students not as group therapy (which it is not) but rather as a chance to be together, discuss, share reactions, share a meal or a leisure activity, and the like. IFE staff shall seize such occasions as opportunities to observe students and to identify possible cases of malaise or fragility requiring attention.

- For incoming and future students: IFE shall move rapidly post-crisis to include and involve students registered for future semesters in communication about current events as a means for them to gain perspective despite their remove.

- Decisions concerning program withdrawal and academic credit: IFE will continue to assess the post-crisis situation and prospects in order to make a determination about program continuation. IFE will consult risk managers and safety officers at US partner institutions (home universities) for input into this decision. If it is determined that an IFE program(s) will remain open and operating, students wishing to withdraw will receive an “I” (incomplete) for any work not yet completed at the time of withdrawal. At home university request, IFE will consider exceptional cases on an individual basis.

V. EVACUATION PLANS

If in consultation with local authorities and home university officials IFE determines that safety considerations dictate program interruption, IFE

shall assist students individually as they make travel arrangements back home.

If in addition to requiring program interruption, the crisis situation is such that international travel is difficult, risky or impossible, IFE shall activate an evacuation plan. Such a plan is currently being worked out by APUAF and IFE will likely adopt this plan or a version of it.