

# FEA DAY: MEET THE PANELISTS



12:30 PM ET - LUNCH AND LEARN  
Experiences of Travel Professionals:  
The Tried & The Truths  
Moderated by Makeda Haughton

## Makeda Haughton

published author & founder of The Sobe Pod



Makeda Haughton, is a graduate of Communication from the University of Central Florida. Her post-college experience of living in South Korea was an incredibly formative time in her life. During this period, she created The Sobe Pod, a platform where she shared her life and that of other expats to inspire and encourage global travel. Her work in the education sector brought about positive changes, and she is particularly proud of her children's book, *Kim Imani: The Girl Made of Magic*, which she published in Korean and English. The book is aimed at instilling a sense of appreciation and acceptance of diversity among children and celebrates both others and oneself.

Phil Agbeko, the resolute CEO of Hilltop Global Group, passionately drives the firm's evolution into a premier strategic advisory and education consulting entity focused on demystifying Africa through thoughtfully curated study abroad and experiential learning programs across the African continent. Born and raised in Ghana, his global perspective stems from extensive international experiences, inspiring a commitment to redefine global learning programs by highlighting Africa's diverse educational opportunities. Co-founding Hilltop Global Group with fellow Georgetown University alumni, Mr. Agbeko envisions reshaping the African narrative through transformative academic engagements and crosscontinental partnerships. Leveraging over 20 years of diverse professional experience spanning international development, engineering, business development, and technology, he has played a pivotal role in managing several high-budget/high-visibility programs within and outside the continental US. Mr. Agbeko's leadership enriches Hilltop, fostering exchanges between U.S. and international academic institutions and Africa's educational landscape. Beyond professional achievements, he champions corporate social responsibility, empowering communities through inclusive educational initiatives. At the forefront of educational transformation, Mr. Agbeko's unwavering commitment to reshaping Africa's narrative and forging strategic alliances positions Hilltop for unparalleled success and global impact. His leadership stands as a testament to Hilltop's dedication and guidance in effecting positive and transformative change through every trip and program engagement



## Phil Agbeko

CEO, Hilltop Global Group

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## **David Sanderson**

Team Lead, StudentUniverse



David Sanderson began his travel journey 17 years ago, in an STA Travel retail branch, at the University of Michigan. He had recently finished his studies at U of M, and was seeking income to pay off student loans. International education was not on his radar during those years, but a close friend, who had a true passion for travel, guided him into the industry.

Six months later he was on a plane to New Zealand, an experience which opened his eyes to the power of education through travel. Since then, he has held various positions in the industry, helping to educate thousands of students on the benefits of international mobilization, and the potential impact on their personal and professional growth.

Daughter of an American diplomat, Kate Simpson spent most of her youth in France, where she was born. Kate has lived and studied in Australia, Algeria, Ireland and Taiwan. Kate graduated from Yale University with a degree in East Asian Studies and pursued a post-graduate fellowship in Chinese Literature at Taiwan National University before settling in Washington, D.C. After stints in public relations and working on the Hill for Senator Harry Reid, Kate began her career at Academic Travel Abroad, Inc (ATA) in 1988 as their China Program Manager and is now a proud owner of the business with her two partners. Her company's vision is to "enhance global understanding through travel and education." In 2008, Kate completed a three-year executive education program for owners and presidents (OPM) at Harvard Business School. In 2010, Kate and her partners founded a non-profit, the Fund for Education Abroad (FEA), to support students with high financial need in their quest to study abroad. Kate now serves as FEA's Finance Director and Trustee Emerita. Kate has served on the Board and on leadership committees for the NTA (National Tourism Association) and was awarded NTA's Woman of Vision title in the fall of 2019. Kate is currently a member of the Yale President's Council on International Activities. Yoga, reading, hiking, baking and flowers bring Kate much joy.



## **Kate Simpson**

President, Academic Travel Abroad