

## **Sponsors for Educational Opportunity launches programme to promote diversity in the EMEA Alternative Investment space**

**London, 11 February 2021** – Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, Ltd. (SEO London), a registered UK charity focused on promoting ethnic, gender and socioeconomic diversity and inclusion (D&I) across a range of industries, announces the launch of its EMEA-focused Alternative Investment Programme (AIP). The AIP has been developed alongside a range of leading European and global private equity and asset management firms. The alternative investment industry recognises the need for diversity across its professional teams and the programme is dedicated to supporting that process by helping under-represented groups access and develop career opportunities to transform D&I outcomes.

The AIP will identify, train and mentor a new generation of diverse talent for the alternatives industry, thus expanding the pool of talent capable of competing successfully for roles in the sector. This will empower alternatives managers to build diverse teams, deliver against broader diversity objectives and ultimately drive higher returns. With an initial focus on private equity and credit, SEO London's AIP aims to expand into the hedge fund, real estate, infrastructure and other alternatives sectors. With time the AIP hopes to facilitate a common industry framework of best practices around D&I.

The AIP targets talented students and young professionals from underrepresented Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and underprivileged backgrounds, at all stages of their education and career. Through ten comprehensive workstreams, the AIP will provide intensive training, mentoring, job opportunities and ongoing career support. High priority actions are already underway relating to secondary school engagement and training of junior associates through the AIP's flagship Fellowship programme. The Fellowship builds on the outstanding success of a similar programme established in 2009 by SEO London's predecessor entity in the United States. The US programme has developed into an industry-wide community and has successfully placed over 90% of its Fellowship programme participants into permanent positions within private equity and alternative asset managers.

Andrew Fairbairn, Chief Executive and Founder of SEO London, said: *"The alternatives sector has undoubtedly made progress on D&I, but there is much further to go. Evidence shows that diverse teams deliver stronger investment performance and benefit society at the same time. We know D&I is top of mind for limited partners as they try to create standard frameworks and a more systematic approach to socially responsible investing. Therefore we've launched the AIP with leading investment firms to help rising professionals achieve their career dreams, to help those firms make their D&I plans come to life and to yield tangible, lasting results in terms of diverse employee recruitment and retention across the entire industry. We look forward to empowering a new generation of leaders."*

The Alternative Investment Programme's initial Steering Group consists of some of the industry's most high-profile names, including Advent, Apax Partners, Blackstone, Carlyle, CD&R, Cinven, CVC, Goldman Sachs Asset Management Division, Hayfin Capital Management, KKR, Permira, Providence Equity Partners, TA Associates and Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). These firms provide grant funding, strategic guidance and a broad range of in-kind support.

For more information about the AIP, email [aip@seo-london.org](mailto:aip@seo-london.org)

-end-

**About SEO London**



Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, Ltd. (SEO London) is a UK-registered charity delivering superior educational, training and mentoring support to young people from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds. The platform incorporates programmes for secondary school students aged 15-18 (SEO Schools), university students and recent graduates aged 18-24 (SEO Careers) and alumni (SEO Connect). SEO London programming is focused on pre-professional development, career access and long term success within elite global industries.

SEO London was launched in 2000, and has subsequently delivered two decades of transformative leadership in the UK workplace D&I segment. Thousands of SEO London alumni can now be found in UK and global corporates and firms, many holding senior leadership positions. Today, over 14,000 diverse students and professionals are registered with SEO London, benefiting from sponsorship and engagement opportunities with over 120 blue chip firms across industries ranging from financial services to corporate law, consulting, technology, engineering and corporates.

More information about SEO London can be found on SEO London's web site at [www.seo-london.org](http://www.seo-london.org)

**Media Contacts**

Alastair Elwen / Alice Neave

FGH

+44 20 7251 3801

[Alastair.elwen@fgh.com](mailto:Alastair.elwen@fgh.com) / [alice.neave@fgh.com](mailto:alice.neave@fgh.com)