

Welcome to the Kaleidoscope Newsletter!

Welcome to the first issue of the Kaleidoscope newsletter! The purpose of this newsletter is to give AFS Partners a bi-monthly update on the status and progress of the Kaleidoscope project, i.e. the YP2010 Geeraert research project. This will include things such as information about the status of the project, participation rates across the network, a spotlight on research questions, discussion of previous research, and more.



The Essex Research Team
from left Nicolas, Wan, Kali, Belén, Verena

The Essex Research Team

Allow us to introduce ourselves: The research team is based at the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. The Kaleidoscope project is being lead by Nicolas Geeraert (from Belgium), who is an assistant professor at the University of Essex, and an AFS returnee to Thailand. The main researcher on this project is Kali Demes (from England). Kali is also working towards a PhD based on this research.

The team is further supported by a number of Essex students: Belén Gaspar-Garcia (linguistics student from Spain), Verena Barroso-Bastos (psychology student from Brazil), and Wan Li (economics student from China). Belén, Verena and Wan will be part of the team for the academic year 2009-2010.

Past research: BFL YP2005

The research team was involved previously in a study with the YP2005 sending cohort of AFS BFL. In this study, Flemish year program students were surveyed 4 times: 1) before their exchange, 2) at the start of the year, 3) before coming home, and 4) after their return:

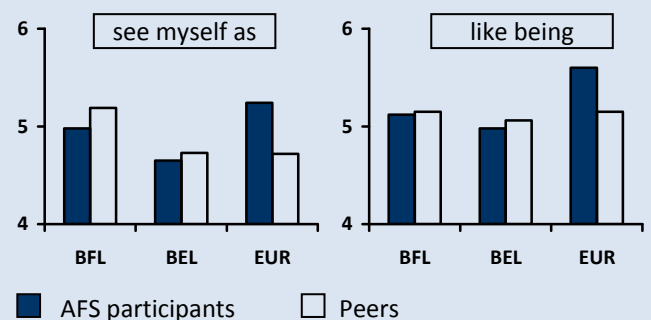


The participant uptake and retention of the study was excellent. 70% of participants (AFS and non AFS peers) were retained throughout (participation rates in table).

	T1	T2	T3	T4
AFS	163	155	113	121
peers	186	154	142	117

Before the exchange, participants were asked how much they **see themselves as** Flemish, Belgian, and European, that is to what extent they would self-categorize belonging to those groups. Participants also rated how much they **like being** a member of those

same groups. These were the results:

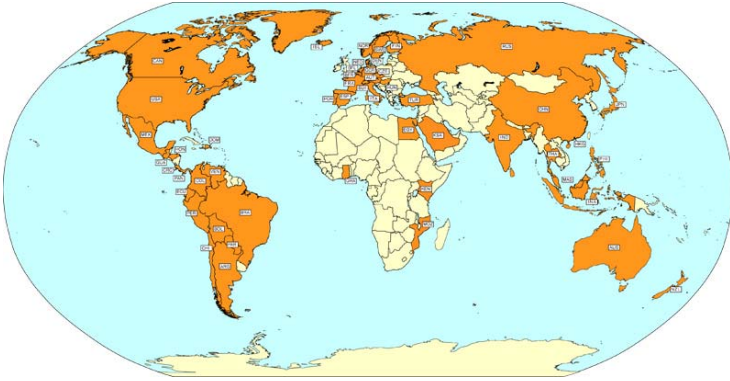


The data showed that AFS students both categorized and liked being European more than peers did. AFS students reported greater liking for being European than being Flemish or Belgian. AFS students thus seem to prefer a more global identity than the more local identities, as they aspire to becoming world citizens.

The study led to many other interesting results looking at cultural adaptation, self-esteem, stereotypes, and many other variables. These findings will be presented in upcoming newsletters.

Special feature: Kaleidoscope project goes live!

Over the past year, the research team has been working continuously to get the YP2010 research project up and running. Many partners may remember that Nicolas and Kali were at the World Congress in Berlin (2008) to present the Kaleidoscope project to AFS Partners. In early 2009, 48 AFS Partners agreed to join the research project. Recently, 3 additional countries joined in (via AFS-USA), bringing the total up to 51 (see map)! The Kaleidoscope Project was officially launched last month. The first students from the southern hemisphere cycle have started the first survey!



Get your AFS students involved!

Working together with AFS International, a number of new procedures have been established to make participant recruitment as efficient and easy as possible for both Partners and the research team.

To help you inform and engage AFS students a number of materials are available. A promotional flyer invites students to visit the interactive website. Partners have also been sent a promotional DVD which can be screened at meetings with your send students (the movie is also available online).

Through the project AFS participants will learn a great deal about themselves, and have a chance of winning prizes. All AFS partners will also gain from the project. You will get an insight into the experiences of your students, which will be summarized in an overall research report and also through more country specific feedback. The research findings will be useful in educational content development, training of participants and volunteers, and should receive substantial academic and press coverage. Although we had some requests, we will unfortunately not be able to enter any AFS staff into the prize draws 😊

Research spotlight

In each issue we cover a specific aspect of the YP2010 study. In the current newsletter we will have a closer look at one of the **research questions**.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do all exchange students experience culture shock in a similar way?

Most researchers believe that intercultural contact and living abroad involves some level of culture shock or acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is not necessarily negative, but it does send a signal to the system that change or adaptation is required.

Many cultural travellers probably do experience some acculturative stress, but some questions remain unanswered. The YP2010 study will examine:

- 1) Does every sojourner experience acculturative stress? Or do some sojourners have immunity?
- 2) Is there a typical course of stress and adaptation over time?

Thank you AFS!

We would like to give a big **thank you** to all the staff at **AFS International** for their continuous support. Many thanks also to the people involved (at AFS INT & MBSA) with the practical implementations of the project.

We are equally grateful to all the Partners in the AFS network for promoting the Kaleidoscope Project so effectively to all YP2010 students!

Project calendar

Action reminders for SH cycle

The Kaleidoscope project is now well under way so don't forget to keep on top of the following actions.

Pre departure actions: If you have any further SH applicants who don't 'opt-out' of the project (Form 6) then check in Global Link that 1. Full App is complete and 2. the World Study Permission is checked.

Ongoing actions: Keep GL up to date on Withdrawals, Early Returns, Program Release etc. The Essex database will be notified of such changes in GL which is important for 2 reasons: 1. the questionnaires are not appropriate for participants who have left the program. 2. this will provide a very useful data point when analysing the data e.g. predicting early return.

Prize Winner

Every 2 months we do a prize draw for all our participants. In October Pieterjan from Belgium won an iPod nano!

