

Intercultural LINK



GLOBAL EDITION

YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 3 - JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2011



Intercultural Learning Starts at Home

There is no better way to be exposed to new customs, languages and perspectives, and to prepare for international opportunities without leaving home than hosting an AFSer!

Apply to host today at www.afs.org/participate.

THE STATE OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK

Update on Priorities

MELISSA LILES, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AFS INTERNATIONAL

“You say good-bye, I say hello....”

Airports and train stations are bastions of **hellos and goodbyes**: Fistfuls of tightly clutched flowers and homemade welcome banners. Heartfelt embraces of greeting and parting. Shining faces full of expectation, delight and anxiety. Smiles interspersed with a tear or two. These are also the thousands of AFSers whose hearts and heads are full of anticipation, excitement and even a little apprehension as the experience of a lifetime dawns.

Continued on Page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

The State of Intercultural Learning (ICL) in the AFS Network
by Melissa Liles [Page 1](#)

Concepts & Theories: Cultural Learning, Cultural Distance
by Kali Demes [Page 3](#)

Kaleidoscope Research Project Update [Page 4](#)

Network & Partner initiatives: Tell Me Your Story!
by M. Hazar Yildirim [Page 5](#)

Network & Partner initiatives: Getting Ready for Take-off
by Birte Vehrs [Page 6](#)

Network & Partner initiatives: Teachers and Encounters that Change the World
by Ivana Pavlovic [Page 7](#)

Beyond AFS ICL News: Interview With Gunther Dietz
by Manon Prévost-Mullane [Page 8](#)

Departure Day: When it's Time to Say Good-bye
by Ellis Motta [Page 10](#)

2011 AFS Network-SIIC Scholarships
[Page 11](#)

ICL Field Conferences & Event Updates
[Page 12](#)

Continued from Page 1

This is the time of year when new AFS journeys take off. During periods as short as four weeks or as long as 10 months, lives will change. However, the development of what we call the “unfinished product,” has already been set in motion via pre-departure orientations and preparations: For AFSers intercultural learning (ICL) – along with bi- and extra-cultural learning (see page 3) – starts long before the first day of the exchange.

The learning taking place is far from one-sided, though: **Host families and schools** are a critical ingredient of virtually all AFS programs. They are local ambassadors and equal actors in the AFS education experience, often benefiting as much if not more than the physical sojourner. Those of us who have had the privilege of hosting know that the gains – in terms of insights about ourselves as well as a new outlook on greater world – far outweigh the happy task of opening our homes and schools.

This July, over 30 AFS volunteers and staff from around the world (see page 11) will have had a chance to share with other educators and professionals in our field how to facilitate intercultural experiences for those who head to the train station or airport, not to travel, but to welcome sojourners into the local community as host families and otherwise. Our team ran a training session on this topic at the prestigious Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications in Portland, Oregon.

Smart schools and community organizations realize that

welcoming diversity – including exchange students! – is not only an act of goodwill, but good for them. It gives their own students and members a chance to expand their worldviews, helping prepare them for some of the many perspectives they are likely to meet in our rapidly globalizing world.

In Serbia, sharing these messages about diversity, mobility, and benefits is a critical focus area for this still very young AFS organization as it develops its roots and school relations with a clear educational focus (see page 7).

For inspirational thinking about local relevance, read our interview on page 8 with **Dr. Gunther Dietz** who is based in Vera Cruz, Mexico and is a specialist on issues relating to intercultural relations among minority, indigenous, and ethnic communities, including migration and integration.

Then, Elis Motta, our newest ICL intern shares some reflections on the bittersweet time known as **AFS Departure Day**, the when AFSers worldwide say good-bye to their host communities and prepare to return home.

Finally, we end with a hello: we say a hearty benvenuto to our new AFS President and CEO, **Dr. Vincenzo Morlini**, who will assume his new role beginning on the first of August. We welcome him and you to this issue of *AFS Intercultural Link*.

Warmly,

ICL Interns at AFS International



Elis Motta, joined the Intercultural Learning Services team in New York in June. Elis is well known across the AFS network: An AFS alumna, she is an active volunteer in her native Brazil, a trainer for the Southern Cone

(Cono Sur) region, and in 2010, attended the Summer Academy for Intercultural Experience in Karlsruhe, Germany and the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A. Elis is also the AFS representative to and a board member of the Iberian-American Youth Agency (Espacio Iberoamericano de Juventud) and has worked as a professional translator for the past four years.



Readers will already be familiar with **Manon Prévost-Mullane**, who began her internship in April and is responsible for managing this newsletter. Manon is currently studying for a master's degree in

Intercultural Relations through the Intercultural Communications Institute and University of the Pacific in the U.S.A. Today she is based in upstate New York, but has lived and worked in Canada and Japan. Past work experiences include serving as the national leader for Canada on the Ship for World Youth, teaching French to high school students and working with the Youth Leaders Invitation Program in Tokyo.



Rounding out the team is, **Laura Kline-Taylor**, who began her internship in July 2010 and who will continue with the team at least through the end of 2011. She will continue to focus on the Intercultural Link

Learning Program. We congratulate Laura who will receive her master's credentials from the SIT (School for International Training) Graduate Institute in July.

CONCEPT & THEORIES

Cultural Learning, Cultural Distance

KALI DEMES, UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

This article is a continuation of "Four Intercultural Relations Hypothesis" highlighted in the November/December 2010 issue of this newsletter.

The Kaleidoscope Research Project, run by University of Essex researchers Nicolas Geeraert and Kali Demes in collaboration with AFS, examines the experiences of AFS participants before, during and after their intercultural exchange. This three year project is over the halfway point, with only a little over six months left of data gathering. Here, Kali shares some of the theoretical background for two of the project's four research foci. You can read about the other two foci in volume 1, issue 6 of this newsletter.

Cultural learning

Within the Kaleidoscope Project, we conceptualise cultural learning in three different ways: bi-cultural, intercultural, and extra-cultural. Bi-cultural learning can be defined as learning about two specific cultures. This type of learning may only prove useful in these two settings, and not extend to other cultural contexts. Intercultural learning is more ambitious, and is about gaining a culture free awareness of how to operate and communicate effectively in any cultural setting. Extra-cultural learning goes beyond this and represents learning that can be applied in any context, cultural or not.

In this study, a number of constructs are used to measure cultural learning. Self-reported language ability, knowledge of the home and host country, as well as sociocultural and psychological adaptation can be considered indicators of bi-cultural learning. Markers of intercultural learning are

intercultural competence, and intergroup anxiety measures (e.g. how comfortable versus anxious one feels when interacting with people from different cultures). Perspective taking, empathy, and personality may signal extra-cultural learning.

We are interested in exploring the relationship between these different forms of learning, and examine how such learning changes over time, how stable any changes are, and what factors are important in facilitating, or driving, cultural learning.

Cultural distance

Cultural distance is a complex and multidimensional concept (see Figure 2). Scholars like Geert Hofstede and Shalom Schwartz have attempted to define cultural distance, assigning different labels to its multi-dimensions. Economic data, such as the gross domestic product (GDP), have also been used as indicators of cultural distance.

In the Kaleidoscope study, we measure cultural distance in yet another way, from the perspective of participants themselves. Specifically, participants are asked to rate how different or similar they think their home and host countries are, in terms of a number of meaningful factors relevant to their exchange (e.g. the climate, pace of life, language, peoples values and beliefs). It will be interesting to see how participants' perceptions compare with pre-existing data on cultural distance.

In addition, we are interested in examining whether different cultural distance measures can predict sojourn outcomes, such as successful

Additional reading and resources about these topics

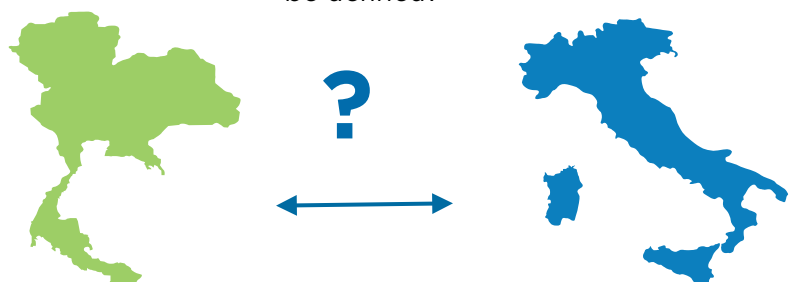
- * "Culture's consequences: comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations" by G. Hofstede
- * "Beyond individualism-collectivism: New dimensions of values" by S.H. Schwartz
- * "Individualism and Collectivism: Theory Application and Methods" by U. Kim, H.C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S.C. Choi and G. Yoon

adaptation, cultural learning, and intergroup perception. For example, intuitively, one would expect that participants travelling to more culturally distant locations, rather than similar ones, would have a harder time adapting to their host country.

We also ask whether the direction of difference matters. For example, does someone travelling to a destination with higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) than their home country have an easier time than someone travelling to a destination with lower GDP? Given the participants' cultural diversity – from over 45 countries – cultural distance is one of the most exciting and central concepts in this research.

With data collection now in full progress, answers to some of these questions and more will become available in the next few months.

How should Cultural Distance be defined?



Kaleidoscope Research Project Update

KALI DEMES, UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX, UNITED KINGDOM



In keeping with AFS's history of cutting-edge research in the field, the Kaleidoscope Research Project is a major undertaking between AFS and the University of Essex that looks at the experience of AFS sojourners during the course of a 10 month program abroad. The study examines well-being, stress, personality, adaptation to the host culture, perception of the home and host cultures, language learning, and more.

The data collection phase of the study – which consists of nine surveys – has now been running for over a year and a half. With under a year to go until all data is collected, here is an update on the status of the project.

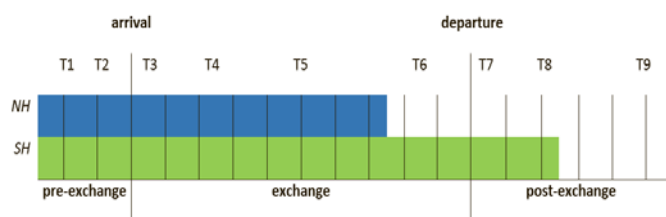


Figure 1. progress of NH (blue bar) and SH (green bar) data collection (as of May 2011).

Nine questionnaires are distributed over the course of approximately 18 months per sojourner. Timing of surveys are customised by AFSers' travel dates, with each student invited to complete two surveys before their departure (1 & 2), four during their exchange (3, 4, 5 & 6), and three upon their return home (7, 8 & 9). As of May 2011, AFS participants who departed in the

first half of 2010 ("Southern Hemisphere" programs) have returned home and are in the process of completing the eighth questionnaire of the study. AFS's 2010 Northern Hemisphere program travellers, who left their home countries between July and December 2010, are over halfway through their exchange year and are between surveys five and six (see figure 1.)

In terms of project involvement across the AFS network, there are currently 2486 active subjects, or those who have completed at least one of the pre-arrival surveys. This is around 30% of AFS's 2010 year program participants! These respondents continue to have access to their survey account and receive invitations to complete them. Overall, 1730 participants have completed both pre-arrival surveys (1 & 2), and 1252 participants have completed every survey from 1 through 5. Other sojourners have completed a number of different surveys, missing one or two along the way.

The researchers are now in the process of preparing this vast data set (with almost 2 million data points!) for review, and have begun to look at some

preliminary findings. The framework that was used in designing this project and that will help guide the data analysis, consists of four main research areas: acculturation, cultural learning, intergroup contact, and cultural distance.

Predicting Success and Optimizing the AFS Experience

Working with the Essex team, AFS hopes to use the study data to develop predictive measures for both successes and difficulties. We will also look to identify which are the impacting elements that can be adjusted, and in what relationship to one another, so that we can continue to make the AFS educational experience as effective as possible.

All AFS Partners interested in helping shape research analysis should contact the Essex researchers and Anna Collier at AFS International (anna.collier@afs.org).

Meet one of the AFS Network Intercultural Learning Work Group Members



Annette Gisevius is the head of the Intercultural Learning Department at AFS Germany. She holds a Masters degree in Culture Studies from Leuphana University, Germany, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Angelo State University in Texas, USA. In addition to curriculum development, she facilitates intercultural training for groups of all ages, including

teachers and trainers. Her focus is on cultural awareness, conflict styles, and experimental learning in non-formal adult education. She is an intercultural coach, a certified administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory and the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory, and a certified trainer of Technology of Participation, known as TOP©



PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES

Tell Me Your Story!

M. HAZAR YILDIRIM, VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR, AFS TURKEY

“Tell Me Your Story” was the theme of AFS Turkey's Class Exchange Program that took place this May when 110 participants, including teachers and chaperons, from the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, and Italy were hosted in four cities across Turkey: Adana, Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir.

Supported by AFS volunteers and teachers, the project aimed to build awareness of differences and similarities

between cultures by creating an intercultural learning (ICL) platform for participants to learn from each other.

The week-long Class Exchange Program included assignments such as selecting a project theme before arrival, home-stays with host families, and home country presentations at opening ceremony events – plus various cultural and social activities, and local sightseeing.

Participants shared videos, pictures, and stories about how young people live in their communities and countries. The project dates also coincided with a national holiday in Turkey: Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, and participants were able to join these Turkish celebrations.

After a full week of learning experiences, fun and creativity, the participants left Turkey with great memories and strong connections with their host families that will last a lifetime!



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

AFS Intercultural Programs is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

We pursue our mission by providing quality intercultural learning opportunities for a growing number of young people, families, other stakeholders and wider audiences, thus developing an inclusive community of global citizens determined to build bridges between cultures.

Real life experiential learning, supported by structured reflection, is the core of our programs. We endeavor to link our intercultural learning opportunities to the defining global issues facing humanity. We reach out to past, current and future

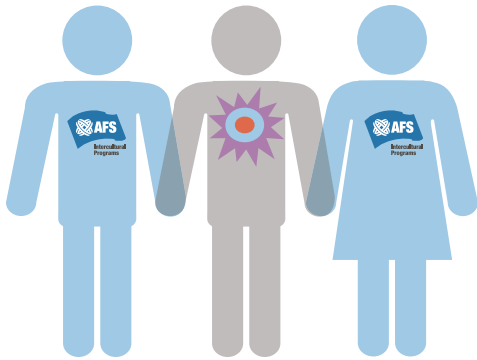
participants, volunteers, and other stakeholders using the media and technology they use.

Volunteers and volunteerism are who we are. Our organization brings about changes in lives through and for our global community of volunteers.

We are recognized as an educational organization by schools and the appropriate authorities. We work to create a regulatory environment that supports our programs.

As a learning organization, we welcome change and critical thinking. We are innovative and entrepreneurial in advancing the strategic directions, working together with others whenever appropriate.

To learn more about our global network and get involved today, visit www.afs.org.



NETWORK AND PARTNER INITIATIVES Getting Ready for Take-off

BIRTE VEHRHS, DIRECTOR OF SENDING SUPPORT, AFS GERMANY

to at the SIIC training that I attended last July are still in my mind, and I can imagine that they might help sojourners, staff, and volunteers in these circumstances.

They are simple:

1. “**Always assume good intentions** in an intercultural encounter” – I still remember Janet Bennett reinforcing this at the SIIC conference...

In practice, do all students, natural and host parents, volunteers, and staff keep this crucial rule in mind? Do all apply it for each case to determine good intentions that might have driven a resulting challenging behaviour?

2. “**People are only open for ‘the Other’ in the learning zone**, neither in their comfort zone, nor in the panic zone”.

It is worthwhile to bear in mind that during intercultural encounters, if you stay in the learning zone, you will be able to openly encounter differences with your mind and senses. When a student takes detailed photos of the bathroom, kitchen, or fridge which do not really

appeal to him or her, withdraws to his room, or spends a great deal of time in front of the computer, they may not be open and in the learning zone. Host families, volunteers and staff can help determine if the sojourner is in the comfort zone and does not want to engage, or is in the panic zone and needs help. The goal is to keep the sojourner in the intercultural learning zone.



Birte Verhs, a 2010 AFS-Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications (SIIC) scholar and AFS Germany staff member, shares insights gained at the Institute just as we prepare to welcome the newest AFSers.

This is the time of the year when the next generation of AFS students are getting ready to dive into a new culture and environment – full of curiosity, hopes and wishes. At the same time, host families and volunteers are preparing to receive the new student(s) with their own individual hopes, ideas and expectations in mind.

Working with the sending support team within AFS Germany, I have often experienced how sensitive the first weeks of the encounter are. They bring challenges, hassles, disappointments, and even hurt feelings – at times even leading to family changes. Two elements referred

Meet an AFS ICL Responsible

The ICL Responsibilities are the individuals identified by each AFS partner as the key person in their organization accountable for ensuring that our programs and beyond have an intercultural learning focus. This is one of the 50+ in our global network.



Lucas Barchuk,
AFS Argentina & Uruguay

Lucas Barchuk works for AFS Argentina and Uruguay as the Volunteer Development Coordinator and is part of the AFS Southern Cone (Cono Sur) region trainer pool.

Lucas' academic background is in psychology and his degree is from the University of Buenos Aires.

Today, he is responsible for training Argentine and Uruguayan volunteers on how to provide high quality support to all sojourners, keeping in mind that our mission is to promote intercultural understanding across cultures. Based on personal experience, Lucas believes that reflection is as important to intercultural learning as is immersion.

Lucas has facilitated numerous national and regional trainings on intercultural topics, including the International Workshop on Intercultural Learning, which took place in parallel to the AFS World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2010.

PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES: Teachers and Encounters that Change the World

IVANA PAVLOVIC, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, AFS SERBIA

In April of this year, AFS Serbia (Interkultura Serbia) organized its first nation-wide seminar for high school teachers, titled “Intercultural learning – the encounters that change the world.” Two days were spent delivering workshops, lectures and presentations with the aim of informing Serbian high school teachers about key intercultural education (ICL) concepts, particularly in the context of AFS student exchange programs.

The program was divided into three sections:

- 1. Informative:** The history, programs, and structure of AFS globally and in Serbia.
- 2. Theoretical:** Lectures and presentations on culture, intercultural learning, and youth mobility in Europe.
- 3. Practical:** Workshops about how teachers can become active participants in student exchange programmes and how to develop an action plan for their own involvement.

AFS in Serbia

AFS programmes operated in the former Yugoslavia from 1966 to 1991 at which time they were suspended due to the break-up of the country. In 2007, a group of enthusiastic Serbian alumni from the 1980s, with the assistance from AFS Italy and the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), restarted exchanges here, sending two students on a year programme.

From the modest two students in 2007, this year AFS Serbia will be sending 13 students and hosting 10. The organization’s priority is to develop and strengthen our volunteer network and school relations. As we continue to increase participation, we feel it is

important to increasingly involve teachers because schools are our first partners in exchange programmes.

Theoretical input

The presentation “Models of Culture and Intercultural Learning” introduced workshop participants to key concepts from Geert Hofstede, Edward Hall and Milton Bennett, highlighting the relevance of their research for youth work. Teachers learned about the Iceberg Model of Culture, various cultural dimensions, behavioral components of culture and the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Special attention was paid to the stages in Bennett’s model as particularly relevant for work with exchange students.

In addition, the topic of youth mobility in Europe and using exchange programmes as a means to achieve and enhance this for high school students was discussed. After presenting the aims and strategies of the youth mobility in Europe scheme, participants were invited to talk about the development of this in Serbia. Today there are very few such opportunities locally, which is why many young Serbians have never been abroad. Teachers debated how AFS Serbia can be used to improve this situation such as to enable young people to study abroad, learn foreign languages, and become more internationally prepared and independent overall. The participants reached the conclusion that one of the main barriers to youth



High school teachers in Serbia learn key ICL concepts

mobility is the lack of information about opportunities, and agreed that priority should be placed on informing high school students in Serbia about exchange programmes such as those offered by AFS.

Planning action

Having raised their awareness about the learning content of student exchanges, the final aim of the workshop was for participating teachers to develop a concrete action plan to take back to their own communities. Together with the facilitators, teachers developed a series of practical activities to be used in their schools. These are aimed at incoming and outgoing students, their classmates, and to help engage other teachers who are less familiar about student exchange programmes.

At the end of the event, 18 teachers walked away feeling better equipped with practical steps they could personally use to promote high school student mobility and develop cooperation between their schools and AFS Serbia moving forward. There are plans to have at least one teacher seminar every year. As many of the attendees had not been exposed to AFS or ICL concepts prior to this workshop, the word is beginning to spread, and there is an increased willingness to learn and participate in further training, activities, and hosting.



BEYOND AFS ICL NEWS Interview With Gunther Dietz

BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH MANON PRÉVOST-MULLANE,
INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL

Dr. Gunther Dietz is a research professor in intercultural studies at the Instituto de Investigaciones en Educación, Universidad Veracruzana (www.uv.mx/iie) as well as a teacher trainer in the Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural (www.uv.mx/uvi), a decentralized intercultural B.A. program designed for indigenous communities throughout the state of Veracruz.

How did you get involved in the intercultural field?

I grew up bilingually in southern Chile, shaped by intercultural relations between Chileans, German immigrants, the indigenous Mapuche, and non-indigenous settlers. Since then, questions of linguistic and cultural diversity have proven fascinating and challenging.

What academic field was your entry into intercultural studies?

I was trained as a social anthropologist in Germany, and quickly saw the possibilities of applying this knowledge to diversity in Western society overall, particularly in migration-induced intercultural relations. My dissertation focused on ethnicity and intercultural relations in the Western Mexican indigenous movement. Intercultural education in Latin America is primarily focused not on immigrant communities, but on indigenous peoples.

Which aspect of intercultural learning or communication has your work focused on?

I promote awareness that intercultural education is a situational and contextual phenomenon, not a technical “solution” for challenges allegedly posed by migrant or native minorities.

Intercultural education should not be limited to particular “models” or “solutions.” I analyze how diversity is treated: as a problem (e.g. in otherwise homogenous schools), as a right (e.g. of particular minorities to be recognized, visualized, and empowered) or, as a resource (e.g. for enriching cross-cultural interactions).

What do you wish more people would understand about intercultural work?

Intercultural education has quickly become institutionalized as a solution for minority integration in schools, such as migrants in European contexts and indigenous in Latin American contexts. However, instead of being a simple solution, diversity challenges schools as a whole and this needs to be re-thought and re-articulated for populations which are now more heterogeneous than ever.

What would you suggest for people new to the ICL field to read as they get started?

There is a great deal of literature on intercultural studies and education. Introductory books by James Banks, Christine Sleeter and Sonia Nieto will help “beginners” to get a first orientation into this growing, vibrant, and fascinating field. In 2009 I published a

book called *Multiculturalism, Interculturality and Diversity in Education: an Anthropological Approach* (published in Germany and the U.S. by Waxmann), in which I develop a comparative view on intercultural studies in different national contexts.

What are the hot topics in ICL these days?

It is crucial that community members and social movements be part of negotiations about intercultural education in order for it to be addressed appropriately in schools.

This also means that intercultural designs of educational institutions will be more empowerment-oriented in some and mainstreamed in others. To avoid outside or administrative impositions, it is necessary to define boundaries and distinguish three aspects: (1) the intra-cultural aspect, which is the recognition of difference and a person’s identity through empowerment; (2) the inter-cultural aspect, or the promotion of diversity through interaction; and (3) the trans-cultural aspect, meaning the redistribution of cultural, economic and social capital. If these three aspects of difference, diversity and

“Intercultural education in Latin America is primarily focused not on immigrant communities, but on indigenous peoples.”

inequality are not distinguished, but mixed up inside a particular intercultural education project, we may end up “culturalizing” socio-economic disparities and inequalities, or “ethnicizing” particular populations through new stigmas.

How has the ICL field changed since you entered it?

It is rather difficult to identify broad changes. Through my work in Germany, Spain, and now in Mexico, I have had the opportunity to be exposed to

continued on page 9

continued from page 8

wonderful local and regional projects, that work well in their own contexts, but which cannot be “exported” to other situations.

In different indigenous regions of Mexico, the Zapatista uprising of 1994 has openly challenged the nation-state, which is now reaching the educational

sphere. New programs called “intercultural universities” are designed for, and by, indigenous peoples. In certain contexts, such as at Universidad Veracruzana Intercultural, indigenous and other local actors appropriate themselves of these new spaces to access higher education, but also to challenge Western and Eurocentric notions of academic “knowledge”..The subsequent

“dialogues of knowledge” between communities, universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) end up creating very novel, hybrid and unorthodox academic programs, through which young indigenous students are redefining their identity and their future professional role between their communities and mainstream Mexican society.

NETWORK & PARTNER INITIATIVES ICL for AFSers

The AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program is making waves! We are expanding our materials for AFS volunteers and staff by publishing a series of useful, concise and highly digestible documents that we call “ICL ...for AFSers.”

Like this newsletter, **ICL ...for AFSers** articles discuss relevant concepts and give insight into the great minds behind those ideas. The series supports the AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program curriculum and provides theoretical and practical information to reinforce of collective ICL knowledge of the AFS community. It shares AFS’s perspectives on foundational ideas as well as the field today.

For registered AFS volunteers and staff, four documents are now available for use. Every month an additional two will be shared.

Go to icresources.afs.org now or contact your local AFS office to get started!



CONFERENCE UPDATE 200 Years of Education in Uruguay



The 1st National Congress on Intercultural Education (1er Congreso Nacional de Educación Intercultural), 2-4 September 2011 in Montevideo, Uruguay.

This event is organized in part by AFS Argentina and Uruguay. It is sponsored by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education of Uruguay in connection with Uruguay’s bicentennial celebrations. The event will address five primary themes: 1) Territorial and symbolic borders: The educational center in its geographic, social,

and cultural setting; 2) The challenge of being a teacher: Professional training and practice, motivation and demotivation; 3) How the educational center confronts conflict, intolerance, and exclusion; 4) Educational and family centers: Delegation, conflict, and/or cooperation?; and 5) Globalization, technology, and education: Impulses and barriers.

Visit the event website for more information: <http://www.congresoeducacionintercultural.edu.uy/index.html>

Departure Day: When it's Time to Say Goodbye

ELIS MOTTA, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL

When I was first invited to be a volunteer for the AFS USA Departure Day in New York I could not imagine what a huge structure it involved. I knew we would be dealing with hundreds of AFS students from all around the world minutes before they were heading back to their country of origin, but what I did not know was how organized and motivated the AFS USA team of staff and volunteers was. And even after years volunteering for AFS, we sometimes forget how rich these experiences are: being in contact with hundreds of students from many different countries and cultures at the moment they are closing what they may very likely call the best time of their lives.

Some are talking, telling jokes or stories, singing, or just trying to make the most of the very last hours they have together. Others are quiet, sitting together in silence or simply hugging their dear friends for as long as they can before heading to opposite ends of the globe.

You see smiles, laughter, and tears – it is not uncommon to find all of these expressions on the same face at the same time. You see luggage, a lot of luggage. Watching them, I couldn't stop thinking, "What is it that these young men and women are taking home with them?" It is certainly not just one (or two, or three) heavy suitcases. They are also taking home new family, friends, language, and new ways to communicate, dress, and behave.



And they are bringing with them a changed world view. The world is now much bigger for these students than it was on the day they arrived in the USA. I would even dare to say that it is much more diverse now, too.

This is an instance when we can clearly see how much people change during their AFS experience. A staff member from AFS Japan who was with us to be a chaperon for her students back to Japan told me how surprised she was to not be able to distinguish the Japanese students from among most of the other Asian students present: "They all look American now," she said.

And the same applies to students from all other countries who had just spent a year in the U.S. They have grown to incorporate the "American style" into the

way they dress, but more than that, they also talk and act like US Americans now – well beyond the fact that they are fluent in English (and, in some cases, now a little less fluent in their mother tongue!) They can now be considered culturally comfortable in the USA, and culture shock seems to be a distant experience, at least until they return home.

During the hours that I spent with these students, I wondered how much each had learned from the other. How much did the Italian girl gain from the Thai boy who went to the same school in a small Georgia town? What would the Finnish student have learned about other cultures – other ways to communicate, share emotions and build relationships – in interacting with her Dominican best friend who was somewhere in Maine? There was also the Turkish youth who dated the Paraguayan girl during the year they spent in South Carolina.

In short, these sojourners did not only learn a lot about US American culture, they also learned how to relate and interact with different cultures – helping them better prepare to interact with the increasingly diverse and globalized world in which we live.

So, at a time of good-byes, the forward-looking parting words of Jorge Castro, President of AFS USA, could not have rung more true: "This is not the end. This is just the beginning."

Returning home means continued learning. Help your sojourners reflect on the AFS experience by offering multiple and engaging re-entry orientations. Contact icl@afs.org for suggestions.



2011 AFS Network-SIIC Scholarships



Marcia Hodson



Katya Bagdasarova



Jana Holla



Thanks to our very generous funders we are pleased to announce that the following staff & volunteers attended this year's Summer Institute of Intercultural Learning (SIIC) in order to gain insights and multiply these back to the AFS community. A total of 32 AFSers will be in Portland, Oregon (USA) this July, not only attending workshops but also hosting a "Meet AFS" evening and running an evening educational session on the topic of adult intercultural learning: "ICL without Leaving Home."

VOLUNTEER AWARDEES

Africa

- Christina Noi-Okwei, Volunteer and ICL Responsible, AFS Ghana
- Jana Holla, Volunteer, Trainer and Member of the EFIL Pool of Trainers, AFS Egypt

Asia Pacific

- Helen Walker, Volunteer, Chapter President and Facilitator, AFS New Zealand

Europe

- Anna-Maria Hass, Volunteer, Member of the EFIL Pool Trainers, Training Coordinator, AFS Germany
- Anne Hitzegrad, Volunteer Chapter Representative and Member of the EFIL Pool of Trainers, AFS Germany
- Eva Vitkova, Volunteer, Member of the EFIL Pool of Trainers, Member of the EFIL Training Advisory Body, Member of the European Pool of Representatives and Partner Chair, AFS Czech Republic
- Katya Bagdasarova, Volunteer, ICL Responsible and Partner Vice Chair, AFS Russia

South America

- Francis Mason, Volunteer, AFS Chile
- Julia Taleisnik, Volunteer and Chapter President, AFS Argentina
- Natalia Salazar, Volunteer and Chapter President, AFS Chile
- Silvia Roloff Posnik, Volunteer, Member of the National 18+ Programs Group and Member of National ICL Development Group, AFS Brazil

STAFF AWARDEES

- Marcia Hodson, Support and Quality Assistant and ICL Responsible, AFS Brazil
- Myriam Berube, Director of Volunteer Development, AFS Canada
- Nathalie Guzmán, Participants Support Coordinator and ICL Responsible, AFS Dominican Republic
- Susan Adams Yamada, Hosting Coordinator, AFS Japan

Six additional AFS representatives from around the Network will also attend with Anna Collier, Manager of Intercultural Learning Services at AFS International present this year as a resident fellow.

Some 11 US AFSers will also attend through AFS USA.

We hope to offer this same opportunity to members of the AFS Network for the July 2012 edition of SIIC in Portland so, stay tuned for this and other future opportunities for AFSers to further our ICL expertise.

Many thanks to all who applied!

CONFERENCE UPDATE NAFSA 2011

The Association of International Education (NAFSA) held its 2011 annual conference from 29 May to 3 June in Vancouver, Canada. NAFSA is an international industry organization committed to building the skills, knowledge, and competencies of its members in relation to international and intercultural education (ICL). The theme of their 63rd annual conference was Innovation and Sustainability in International Education.

With almost 9000 attendees from around the world, topics that

emerged as most relevant to ICL were:

1. Uses and risks of technology in international education (marketing, distance-learning, student contact)
2. Assessing student learning on study abroad programs (academic, language ability, intercultural competence)
3. Incorporating theory into the study abroad experience regarding assessments, course design, and orientations; and

4. ICL opportunities and challenges in Service-Learning and international volunteerism.

A conference report will be issued later this year. If you are interested in receiving conference materials, please contact us at icl@afs.org.



ICL Field Conferences & Event Updates

September	October	November
<p>Across Languages & Cultures 4th International Adriatic-Ionian Conference 1-3 September 2011: Venice, Italy http://alc.unive.teoriacomunicazione.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=67</p> <p>EAIE 2011 Annual Conference 13-16 September 2011: Copenhagen, Denmark http://www.eaie.org/copenhagen</p> <p>SIETAR Europa 2011 Annual Congress 21-25 September 2011: Krakow, Poland http://www.sietareu.org/congress-2011 AFS attending.</p>	<p>Intercultural Competence & Conflict Resolution 21 October 2011: Stockholm, Sweden AFS hosting.</p> <p>12th Young SIETAR Congress 26-30 October 2011: Ljubljana & Planica, Slovenia On Our Way to a Better World: How our ideas, experiences and skills can help to address challenges of today's and tomorrow's world. http://www.youngsietar.org</p> <p>2nd Forum on Intercultural Learning and Exchange Adult Intercultural Learning 27-30 October 2011: Colle di Val d'Elsa, Italy http://www.interculturalita.it/ AFS hosting.</p>	<p>17th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning & Training 30 November - 2 December 2011: Berlin, Germany New Learning Cultures http://www.online-educa.com/</p> <div style="border: 1px solid orange; padding: 5px;"><p>Currently</p><p>IAIR Biennial Conference 24-28 July 2011: Singapore Leadership in the Multicultural World: Exploring New Frontiers of Leadership Theory, Method and Practice http://www.intercultural-academy.org/iair2011conference/theme.html AFS presenting.</p></div>

If you are aware of upcoming conferences in the intercultural area, please advise us at icl@afs.org



YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

Call for Submissions

AFS members are invited to submit articles, news items and intercultural activities with accompanying graphics or photos for consideration in future issues of *AFS Intercultural Link*. Submissions can be AFS-specific or part of the larger Intercultural Learning (ICL) field. Simply send your submissions to Manon Prévost-Mullane at AFS International: manon.prevost-mullane@afs.org.

Questions or Comments

icl@afs.org

Intercultural Learning Work Group

Johanna Nemeth (Austria)
Rosario Gutierrez (Colombia)
Annette Gisevius (Germany)
Irid Agoes (Indonesia)
Lisa Cohen (International)
Melissa Liles, Chair (International)
Lucas Welter (International)
Roberto Ruffino (Italy)

Newsletter Editor: Melissa Liles

Editorial Consultant: Lisa Cohen

Newsletter Manager: Manon Prévost-Mullane

Design Consultant & Graphics: Raquel Martinez

Contributing Writers: Anna Collier, Laura Kline-Taylor

© 2011 AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc. All rights reserved.