



GLOBAL EDITION

Intercultural LINK

YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 2 - APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2011

Bougez-vous for culture!



AFS France has developed new educational tools to support intercultural education in classrooms all across France.

Learn more on page 5.

Intercultural Learning: The Heart & Soul of AFS

MELISSA LILES, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AFS INTERNATIONAL

As seasons are shifting in many parts of the world, change is in the air. Major political upheaval is underway in the Middle East and Africa. Rebuilding continues after the devastating events in Japan this March. At times of change such as these, we are reminded more than ever of the importance of the AFS mission.

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Here at AFS International, we will soon see a transition in our leadership: We bid a fond goodbye to outgoing AFS President Francisco “Tachi” Casal, under whose direction we have begun to make important inroads in strengthening our intercultural learning content and educational efforts. We eagerly anticipate a new president who will soon join us and continue our work to fulfill the AFS Mission and Vision.

Here are some other changes worth sharing since our last issue:

Same name, new meaning! Moving forward, we will use the name AFS Intercultural Link not only for this newsletter, but as the name of all of our new initiatives including the AFS Core Intercultural Learning (ICL) Competency Development Program, which will now be known as the **AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program**.

An excellent team of master trainers has been assembled and is busy designing the Learning Program curriculum and materials. They are working towards three milestones in 2011 including a certification event for regional-level ICL trainers; in-person staff and volunteer Program training events; and the launch of the Program’s distance-based offerings.

Another part of this initiative is the “**Intercultural Link: ICL for AFSers**” series of short articles and videos on intercultural topics that are important for the work we do in AFS and beyond, as they can help our schools, families and communities. These are tied to the Learning Program and are intended to help reinforce essential topics ranging from cultural adaptation to communication styles to AFS’s own research, past and present. Look for these soon at www.afs.org and other digital spaces near you. Yet another exciting undertaking is the AFS ICL Responsibles project that brings

together from around the world all AFS professional staff focused on educational content development. Over 50 staffers participate in regular video discussions about hot topics and more. Thoughts about what “intercultural learning” means in some of their many national contexts is featured on page 6. Finally, this issue of the newsletter...

- ✓ celebrates notable recent achievements in Germany, Italy and Malaysia,
- ✓ shares AFS France’s exciting new educational poster from its new schools campaign,
- ✓ links you to learning games from our friends at the Thiagi Group, and
- ✓ features insights from industry leader and AFS champion Dr. Janet Bennett about how AFS is the “perfect stepping-stone” for young people preparing for a globalized future.

Enjoy as, together, we work to change the world for the better.

Over 350 Italian and international guests attended the Reconciling Babel Conference in Milan



Meet an AFS Network Intercultural Learning Work Group Member

Dr. Irid Agoes offers the AFS Network her extensive experience and expertise in the intercultural arena.

More than 20 years ago, she was one of the founding members of the AFS Asia-Pacific initiative and she served as Partner Director of AFS Indonesia for 10 years. She is also a former AFS International Trustee and AFS Indonesia Board Member.

Irid recently retired as Director of The Institute of International Education (IIE) in Indonesia and Director of the Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF), organizations that administer international education scholarships.

She is currently the Chair of the American Studies Graduate Programs of Universitas Indonesia, Chair of the Indonesian Intercultural Studies Centre, President of SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training & Research) Indonesia, a Lecturer on Intercultural Relations at the University of Indonesia’s Graduate Program and President of the International Muslim Women Scholars in Indonesia.

Members of the AFS Network ICL Work Group met in April 2011



CONCEPT & THEORIES:

Back to Basics: Sympathy, Empathy in the Intercultural Equation

MANON PRÉVOST-MULLANE, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL

In Judeo-Christian tradition and, more broadly, Western society, the Golden Rule, “Do to others as you would like them to do to you,” conveys a noble wish to create harmony between people. The question is, though: Is your vision of harmony the same as your neighbor’s? Is yours the same as your hosted student’s? Chances are, there are significant, if unapparent, differences between your and their perceptions of harmony and therefore how each of you would actually hope to be treated.

The dilemma described above is related to the difference between sympathy and empathy, both important components that can help facilitate cultural adaptation. Sympathy is a common reaction to another’s situation based on imagining how you yourself would feel if you were faced with the same circumstances. It is demonstrated by the expression, “to walk a distance in another person’s shoes.” Sympathy can be helpful in that it can be comforting to know someone else has been in a position similar to yours. However, it can also be viewed as an insensitive reaction to difference – specifically, the actual differences between the other person and

yourself – and, as a result, inaccurate assumptions may prevent effective communication. Sympathy based on the minimization of differences might even feel patronizing to the recipient or create defensiveness.

Empathy, on the other hand, means imagining that not only are you walking in another person’s shoes, but you are *looking through her or his eyes and heart as well*. Developing this “other”-focused approach in communication can help to overcome a common ethnocentric belief that everyone is basically the same.

According to Milton Bennett in his chapter “Overcoming the Golden Rule: Sympathy and Empathy,” found in his book *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*, there are six steps that can guide you towards employing empathy rather than sympathy in your interactions with others.

The first step is *assuming difference*. If we can accept this, we are likely to be more able to imagine our thoughts and feelings from other perspectives.

The second step is *knowing self*. To accomplish this, you must be aware of the cultural and individual values, assumptions, and beliefs that define your own personal identity. The more aware you are of your identity, the less risk there is of losing yourself as you develop and demonstrate empathy.

Third, *suspending self*, continues to build upon the first two steps. Here, imagine setting aside your personal identity and expanding your boundary between self and the environment. You are then ready to



turn your attention to experiences outside your own.

Allowing guided imagination is step four. Similar to imaginative participation in a movie or novel, this step involves letting your imagination be captured by the other person’s experience. This allows you to shift from being outside the person to being inside of them, looking out.

Building on this is step five, *allowing empathetic experience*. This experience is described by Bennett as both familiar and alien. For example, doing a normal activity like washing dishes, but on a different planet! Achieving empathy, and only with empathy as Bennett emphasizes, is having the privilege to live in another person’s experience, including the perception of different thoughts and feelings about the world, at least for a brief moment of time.

The final step, *reestablishing self*, is the process of returning to your own identity. This is necessary for effective empathetic communication, as it is the link that contrasts the clear

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recognition of differences between ourselves and the other person and serves to create a more sensitive and respectful climate for interracial and intercultural communication.

Using this approach of empathy allows us to re-examine the Golden Rule, transforming it into what Bennett calls the *Platinum Rule*, “Do to others as they themselves would like to have done to them.”

Following the Golden Rule principle, I would bring you a cup of coffee because I enjoy drinking coffee and believe you would appreciate it. If I followed the Platinum Rule, I would notice you drink tea and bring you a cup of tea because that is what you like.

The development of empathy acknowledges our differences and allows us to see how others would like to be treated from their own

perspective. Essentially, it is putting yourself in another’s shoes and shifting your perspective to the other person’s.

Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication is one of the three “must-read-books” for those who are new to the intercultural communication world, says Janet Bennett in her recent interview with Anna Collier, found on page 9.

We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are. - Anais Nin

AFS LEARNING SESSION OUTLINES Playing, Laughing, and Learning

AFS is a big fan of Thiagi (Dr. Sivasailam Thiagarajan) and, as you may recall from his earlier interview in this newsletter (November/December 2010), he is a big fan of AFS.

The Thiagi Group has a similar learning philosophy to AFS’s belief in learning by doing, or experiential learning. Their mission is “to improve human performance effectively, efficiently, enjoyably, and ethically,” and their philosophy is “to take serious things lightly and to take light things seriously.”

This developmental approach is found in their games and activities. Thiagi mentioned a few of his favorites in his interview with us. Here we highlight a few more and demonstrate how they can directly link to the AFS Orientation Framework.

Contact your local AFS organization for five of Thiagi’s activities in AFS Learning Session Outline (LSO) format:

- * Draw a Tree: A 99 Seconds Training Session
- * 20 Questions: Debriefing from Different Perspectives
- * By the Numbers: Challenging Stereotypes
- * Communication Styles Frame Game
- * Structured Sharing: Seeing Both Sides

The AFS LSOs are complete with suggestions for linking them within different stages of the AFS Orientation Framework.

You can find over 200 other free resources (See “Free Training Games” and “All Free Resources.”) at the Thiagi Group website: www.thiagi.com, including “Monthly Training Intelligence Podcasts” (See “Podcasts.”) in which Thiagi discusses different topics such as models for e-learning, games, and activities used in training.

Enjoy playing and laughing while learning!



Contact your local AFS organization (find yours at www.afs.org) for LSOs

AFS ICL Responsibles Unite

At any given time there are many and varied educational events and activities occurring all across the AFS network. In addition, learning materials for families, sojourners and schools are being created or refreshed.

To help ensure that this knowledge is spread throughout the AFS world, the AFS ICL Responsibles - the individuals identified by each AFS Partner as the key person in their organization responsible for the educational content focus of our programs - have begun to meet regularly via online video conferencing.

In addition to materials sharing, the group has begun exchanging ideas and collaborating on new opportunities that stretch across borders and time zones.

For more information or to become involved, please contact Anna Collier (anna.collier@afs.org).

Meet an AFS ICL Responsible

Hazar Yildirim (Turkey)



Hazar is currently the Volunteer Development and Communication Coordinator in Istanbul for AFS Turkey.

Active as an AFS volunteer and, more recently, staff member since his own

exchange to the USA in 2001, he is also a member of the European Federation for Intercultural Learning's Pool Of Trainers and served as the president of the AFS Volunteers Association in Turkey.

He has played a key role in many educational events within AFS including the 2010 European seminar, "Intercultural Learning & Exchanges: Where do we stand and what is the way ahead?"

PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES AFS France Renews Efforts at the School Level

CLAIRE ROZIER, HOSTING SUPPORT COORDINATOR, AFS FRANCE,
TRANSLATION BY SIMON KOCH, PROGRAM ASSISTANT, AFS FRANCE



AFS France is renewing its efforts to impart intercultural learning at the secondary school level, and one way it is doing this is via a new educational poster that can be displayed permanently in a classroom or used as a tool for intercultural activities.

The poster illustrates the concept of culture, the different stages of cultural immersion, and points out the numerous ways in which students can benefit from cross-cultural interactions.

As a complement to the poster, AFS France has developed an accompanying booklet that describes basic concepts of intercultural learning through immersion and includes suggestions for a number of activities that can be conducted as a part of intercultural education in the classroom.

If you would like additional information, Claire Rozier can be contacted by e-mail at claire.rozier@afs.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

Think You Know What “Intercultural Learning” Means? Think Again.

Although within the AFS context we use the term intercultural learning frequently, typically referencing our commitment to our means and mission via the AFS Orientation Framework and AFS Educational Goals (for more information, see volume 1, issue 1 of this newsletter), not everyone outside of AFS defines it the same way we do. And even we have different understandings amongst ourselves.

During the first videoconference of the new AFS ICL Responsibles Group, participants were asked to share how they believe intercultural learning (ICL) is viewed in their respective countries, and if the term—if it is even called this locally—means something different than how we understand it within AFS.

This interesting debate is occurring across the AFS network and in academic and governmental settings around the world, as well.

Here are some of the many varied responses that emerged in the AFS ICL Responsibles conversations. The hope is that these wide-ranging perspectives on a topic near and dear to us will inspire you to continue this conversation yourself, both within AFS and beyond with your families, friends, and associates.

Please keep in mind that the following comments are observations and personal impressions, not confirmed facts or expert opinions.

Different ways intercultural learning is understood world-wide

Reducing racial prejudices: Many countries, especially those with large immigrant populations, distinctive geographical regions, and a culturally distinct native population, seem to view intercultural learning in terms of how it can help reduce racial prejudices and fears of the unknown between peoples.

Bilingual education: Some countries with two or more prominent languages, for example Ecuador with Spanish and Quechua, see intercultural education as being a synonym for bilingual education.

Improving multicultural relations: In places with several autonomous indigenous cultures and languages, like Panama, ICL is seen as a way to facilitate interaction with other cultures and learn how to live together. In some countries, including Belgium and Serbia, interculturalism is synonymous with multiculturalism.

Minority groups: Discussions and school lessons that are labeled “intercultural” often focus on minority groups in some locales.

Mobility and immigration: Distinct from both multicultural and minority populations discussions, ICL is linked in a number of countries, including Costa Rica, Denmark, and Switzerland, to a political debate concerning integration of immigrants and migrants.

Social versus business need: Some see ICL primarily as a social need (e.g. French-speaking Belgium) while others view it in light of globalizing businesses and multicultural workplaces (e.g. USA).

Conflict resolution: In countries such as Turkey, the concept of intercultural learning is perceived of as a way to resolve differences between peoples and their beliefs.

International celebrations: And, some countries simply acquaint ICL with the celebration of otherness such as foreign holidays.

Our ICL Responsibles also shared that increasingly, countries like Chile, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Portugal, and the United States, are offering formal academic



programs in intercultural studies, both at the undergraduate and graduate university levels, in addition to existing occasional courses that are a part of other disciplines (e.g. psychology, sociology).

And we confirmed that although overarching constructs may resonate, the term “intercultural learning” does not always translate well into all languages, especially since it encompasses so many concepts (e.g., intercultural communication, intercultural conflict, and intercultural dialogues).

Reaching out to educators, experts, and beyond, members of the AFS network will continue these discussions and debates throughout 2011 and 2012 at the national level, and in regional meetings and conferences.

In line with the AFS mission, we are committed to remaining relevant to the needs of our audiences from all walks of life, whether individuals or institutions. Stay tuned for information about existing and new AFS offerings in the months ahead that help foster better communication across cultures and create greater comfort with difference.

AFS PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES

AFS Germany Awarded for Positive Societal Impact

ANNA COLLIER, MANAGER OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING SERVICES, AFS INTERNATIONAL

(based on a conversation with BARBARA BRETSCHNEIDER, Specialist of Sponsored Programs and Cooperations, AFS Germany)



AFS has the potential to influence society in a lasting way. In March 2011, Platform for Social Investors (PHINEO) presented AFS Germany with the prestigious PHINEO Award in relation to the work the organization has been doing to increase the share of youth from immigrant backgrounds who participate in student exchanges.

PHINEO, an off-shoot of the Bertelsmann Foundation, is a nongovernment organization that, in its own words, “builds a bridge for all – not only those who do good, but also those who want to support them.” It functions as a platform for social investors, assisting them in locating social causes to support financially.

In 2009, PHINEO opened a nationwide call for German organizations that support social integration through education to present their projects for consideration. After a year of analysis and interviews, PHINEO informed AFS Germany that they had received the award, praising their approach to

assisting young immigrant participants in their integration into German society.

In Germany, over 8% of young people have an immigrant background, but this was not being represented in AFS exchanges. So, in 2002, AFS Germany began working with the Robert Bosch Foundation, brainstorming how they could cooperate to better involve participants with immigrant backgrounds in their programs. The organizations decided to open a scholarship targeting youth with at least one parent not born in Germany.

The first years of the scholarship proved challenging: AFS volunteers and staff visited schools and talked to umbrella organizations that work with immigrant workers. They found that these young people often believe that because of their backgrounds, they will not be selected for exchanges and therefore do not even apply for the opportunity. Also, they are frequently discouraged by financial restrictions and their families not putting a strong emphasis on education.

However, with scholarships available, doors began to open and, thanks to scholarship returnees, today word about this opportunity is spreading and applications are on the rise.

An additional, positive result of the program is that many youth from immigrant backgrounds return from their exchange feeling more “German.” Before their involvement with AFS, many students experienced an identity conflict, caught between their family’s native culture and the German culture in which they live. However, traveling to their host countries as representatives of Germany and being identified there as German have helped them feel more a part of German society. This aspect of increased societal integration is what PHINEO admired most in AFS Germany’s work.

Receiving this award means increased visibility for the organization and will assist AFS Germany in acquiring new project partners as well as more scholarship donors.

SCHOOL’S IN SESSION! Personal & Professional Development Opportunities

Interested in increasing your intercultural knowledge or adding to your ICL skill-set? Attending a Summer Academy of Intercultural Experience (Germany) or Summer Institute of Intercultural Communications (USA) course is just the solution!

Both institutes offer courses on a wide range of topics relevant in the workplace as well as the community such as:

- Intercultural Management
 - Facilitating Intercultural Discovery
 - Resolving Conflict Across the Cultural Divide
- and much more.

REGISTER TODAY!

www.summeracademy-karlsruhe.org



www.intercultural.org/siic



The “Reconciling Babel: Education for Cosmopolitanism” Conference

Around the world, cities today continue to grow and expand, becoming miniature “Towers of Babel,” with their many citizens struggling to make sense of societies that are more diverse yet more connected than ever before—where learning to live as a “global citizen” becomes a necessity for all.

These were the main motivations behind the recent Reconciling Babel Conference, organized by Fondazione Intercultura, sister entity of our AFS organization in Italy, Intercultura, (referred to here as AFS Italy) in partnership with several important Italian universities (see universities below), and EXPO 2015.

Specialists from around the world, including a featured speaker from the International Space Station, and more than 350 participants gathered in Milan from 7-9 April 2011 to reflect on the very concept of global citizenship: why and what it means, and sought to describe the ideal cosmopolis: What would it look like? What kind of rules and

ethics should it and its citizens have? How would its citizens be educated for success in such an environment, ideal or otherwise?

In addition to these larger philosophical questions, the event also provided thinkers and practitioners from across Italy and the world the opportunity to explore concrete themes such as: What kinds of attitudes and behaviors are necessary for people to study, and later, work together?, How can young people be educated for global citizenship?

Using the materials that came out of the conference, Fondazione Intercultura will be developing workshops for Italian secondary schools to engage students in discussions on this timely topic.

The conference drew press coverage in leading newspapers across Italy and received strong support from the President of the Italian Republic, the European Commission representation office in Milan, the Lombardy Region, the Province of Milan and the Municipality of Milan. Along with their biennial forum on intercultural topics, this conference makes Fondazione Intercultura a leading voice in the field of interculturalism in Italy and beyond.



One of many renowned speakers, Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda shares insights on how social transformation grows from a transformation in the inner condition of individuals.



Paolo Nespoli, an Italian cosmonaut on board the magISStra International space station, participated in an in-flight call during the conference’s closing plenary to share the message that, “From here [in outer space] we see a single World, not divided into small nations, and as the human race we manage to work together for the common good.”



AFS PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES Sharing Ideas, Inspiring New Ones at AFS Switzerland

Every two to three months, the staff at AFS Switzerland get together to participate in intercultural learning activities organized by Kristien Knieper and Katrin Pfrunder, two Swiss staff members dedicated to program content.

These activities, based on case studies, help other Swiss staff deepen their own ICL knowledge and put it into practice within in their daily work functions.

One such initiative to make educational concepts and content more accessible is AFS Switzerland’s **ICL Lunch**

Cinemas. Offered during office lunch breaks, Kristien and Katrin select and screen excerpts of a movie that may touch on cross-cultural conflict or issues. The sessions include a guided discussion afterward, during which everyone can reflect on and discuss the themes brought up during the film.

Attendance to these lunch cinemas is optional, but often high!

Some films we recommend for your ICL Cinema:

Outsourced (2006)

Amreeka (2009)

Whale Rider (2002)

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)

Bend It Like Beckham (2002)



DID YOU KNOW? Beyond-AFS ICL News: Interview with Dr. Janet Bennett

Based on an interview by ANNA COLLIER,
MANAGER OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING SERVICES, AFS INTERNATIONAL

I focus primarily on intercultural competence training and training of trainers. What I wish more people would understand about intercultural work is that it is very, very complicated. With whatever you see happening on the surface, you have to look below the surface several times, and then look again! It is the looking again that leads to the richness of the interactions. We will never master it entirely.

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

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, by Anne Fadiman. This is a great starting place as a case study to see the depth of intercultural interactions; *Basic Concepts*, edited by Milton Bennett; *Understanding Intercultural*

Communication, by Stella Ting-Toomey and Leeva C. Chung.

Other things they should do to gain exposure to intercultural interactions include: Host an AFS student; volunteer with AFS in a capacity that involves direct contact with sojourners, host families or schools; interact with people in one's community on a substantial, continuous basis; encourage one's

children to interact with people who are different from themselves.

Curiosity is the only way to not become overwhelmed by intercultural interactions. Form a relationship with someone who can teach you about another culture or mentor you in it. You never stop being surprised by the complexity of what you learn!

How has the intercultural field changed since you entered it?

[Laugh] When I entered the field, we only had two books available on intercultural studies. The field has

In her interview, Janet Bennett mentions the **importance of intentionality** in the intercultural experience.

This means that each element of the experience is intentional, or planned, rather than accidental. In the AFS experience, this means deliberately filling our orientation content, monthly contacts, and reference materials, among other elements, with structured intercultural learning opportunities.

Studies that demonstrate the profound effects of intentionality on intercultural competence development include: Georgetown Consortium Project (2009), Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE) Project (2009), and Maximizing Study Abroad (2006).

grown enormously in the amount of literature available.

Other changes include the fact that people have become much more interested in assessment. They want to know that people are learning what we think they are learning.

A wide variety of professions are now realizing the benefit and necessity of intercultural competence. I work with companies and organizations in the dental and medical fields, social work programs, and even a helicopter corporation that is interested in intercultural training for its global workforce.

Also, people are much more willing to recognize that a bridge can be built between domestic and international diversity. It really is night and day from where we were 30 years ago. We no longer have to prove to everyone that what we do is worth something.

Dr. Janet Bennett is executive director and co-founder of the Intercultural Communications Institute (ICI) and the ICI director of the Master of Arts in Intercultural Relations program in Portland, Oregon, USA. She has served on the board of directors of AFS USA.

How did you get involved in the intercultural field?

My first exposure to the intercultural field was when I chaperoned a two-week AFS bus trip across the country in 1967 with 40 students from 30 different countries. This experience sparked my interest in facilitating understanding among AFS students themselves, as well as in the communities we visited (10 cities in total).

The next summer, I joined the Peace Corps and spent two years in the Truk (Chuuk) District in the Eastern Caroline Islands in Micronesia. This experience was the major motivator for my career in the intercultural field, because we were given language instruction but no intercultural training. Because of this, we spent those two years making incredibly stupid mistakes because we had not had any appropriate preparation.

Which aspect of intercultural learning or communication has your work focused on and what do you wish more people would understand about intercultural work?

If you want to be an effective member in a global workforce, AFS is the perfect stepping-stone.

Hosting is also a perfect way to expose your children to intercultural experiences.

Facebook and ICL Lead to Best Paper in Conference Award

MANON PRÉVOST-MULLANE, INTERCULTURAL LEARNING INTERN, AFS INTERNATIONAL (based on a conversation with JASON LEE)



Jason Lee, AFS Malaysia board member, believes that “intercultural learning is changing with the proliferation of social media.” His paper on this topic, co-authored with Beaumie Kim and Mi Song Kim, won Best Paper Award at the recent Global Learn Asia Pacific 2011 Conference on Learning and Technology in Melbourne, Australia.

In *Creating the intercultural learning narrative using social network sites status updates: An innovative approach in using social media*, Lee shows how Facebook and similar media can enrich the exchange and intercultural learning experience: sojourners’ online status updates and comments serve as windows

into their development during the program.

Lee finds the amount of self revelation shared in this format “is fascinating and breaks away from the traditional research notion of using interviews, blogs or journal writing to gain insights into the intercultural learning experience.” He goes on to describe how the status updates of one student acted, effectively, as a reflection tool and created a narrative of his adjustment and coping while abroad on a year-long academic exchange program.

Data collected by Lee and colleagues continue to be analyzed but, to date, the majority of study participants have found social networks a positive element during their programs abroad. Especially appreciated is the support received from fellow sojourners during difficult times, as well as staying informed on happenings back home.

“The use of social media should not be thought as a replacement for the intercultural learning experience but rather to enhance the experience,” comments Lee. “The traditional notion of disconnecting from home and immersing completely into the new culture does not appear to be possible

when technology is creeping into our lives in every possible [sic] way. So rather than avoiding technology, we have taken the right step in embracing it with recent developments in AFS such as World Café,” the forthcoming AFS online portal.

Jason will be publishing more findings soon. If you are interested in collaborating with him on additional research regarding social media in intercultural learning, please write him at jason.lee@afs.org.

Learn more about the conference: <http://aace.org/conf/glearn/>



Contact your local AFS organization (find yours at www.afs.org) to receive Lee’s paper in its entirety!



Our Mission and Vision

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.

CONFERENCE UPDATES: ICL “Hot Topics” in the Field

So far 2011 has been a busy conference year for AFS – board members, staff, interns and friends of AFS have attended and presented at various industry gatherings around the world.



Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE)

had its annual conference from 9–12 March in Taipei, Taiwan. APAIE is an international non-profit organization whose goal is to activate and reinforce the internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, and to engage the professional challenges of individuals in international education. This year’s discussions focused on interuniversity exchanges, yet there were still things that AFS could learn and apply: One such session presented study results showing that future employers want exchange participants to be able to explain and demonstrate the skills acquired during their international exchanges. These results can be transferred to AFS exchanges if we include university and internship selection committees under the definition of “employers.”



Intercultural Management Institute (IMI)

held its 12th annual conference from 10–11 March at American University’s School for International Services in Washington, D.C. Each year the event pulls together a niche group of individuals from business, education and training sectors of intercultural relations to discuss best practices and share. Key topics this year were the importance of understanding Muslims in the United States, diversity training, intercultural conflicts and cultural approaches to stress, and the development of

intercultural competencies within businesses for a competitive edge.



The Forum on Education Abroad Conference

took place this year from 6–8 April in Boston, USA. “The Forum” is a non-profit association recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad in the United States. The theme of The Forum’s 7th annual conference was Making the Connection: Praxis and Theory in Education Abroad. Session presenters and attendees discussed how to bring theory to practice based on the following four themes: (1) Assessing Global Competencies; (2) Language Learning, impacts of language immersion on identity and the inclusion of non-western languages in US curricula; (3) Re-entry versus re-engagement and why traditional models do not work; and (4) Cities and urban environments as learning labs.



Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research, USA (SIETAR-USA)

met from 13–16 April in Denver, Colorado, USA. SIETAR-USA is part of a global network of national, regional and local SIETAR organizations that promote and facilitate intercultural education, training and research in a wide range of fields including environmental science, international business, health care and higher education. The 2011 event theme was Risk and Resilience in an Intercultural World. Sessions and plenary presentations touched on: (1) tools and techniques for use in an increasingly multicultural world; (2) integrating intercultural learning into corporate

environments (what are tools, training best practices, and evidence of need); and (3) numerous cultural perspectives on the need for intercultural understanding and/or training, including Peru, the First Peoples of Canada, Brazil, and the health care industry.



The European Conference “Framework, Quality and Impact of Young Europeans’ Learning Mobility”

took place in Budapest, Hungary from 11–13 May. The conference was designed to be a forum for researchers and practitioners in the youth mobility field. Sessions and plenary presentations touched on topics such as: (1) Concepts and formats of young people’s learning mobility; (2) Quality, standards and their implementation; (3) Qualification for and through young people’s learning mobility; (4) Comparative youth work; (5) Impact research and evaluation methods; and (6) Current debates and challenges. AFS Germany and AFS Switzerland were invited to present contributions related to research and quality standards. The conference will be continued in 2013.

Thank you to Leo Hitchcock, Jason Lee, Laura Kline-Taylor, Urs-Rainer von Arx, Annette Gisevius, and Anna Collier for contributing conference information for this issue. Stay tuned for further conference updates in upcoming issues of *AFS Intercultural Link*.

If you are attending a conference related to intercultural learning and would like to contribute to our updates, please contact Anna Collier at anna.collier@afs.org.

ICL Field Conferences & Event Updates

May-July	August-September	Upcoming
<p>NAFSA: Association of International Educators 29 May-3 June 2011: Vancouver, Canada http://www.nafsa.org/annualconference AFS presenting.</p> <p>IACCP Regional Conference 2011 30 June-3 July 2011: Istanbul, Turkey http://www.iaccp2011.org</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 AFS presenting.</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>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>17th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning & Training 30 November - 2 December 2011: Berlin, Germany New Learning Cultures http://www.online-educa.com</p>

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



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures

YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK

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Call for Submissions

Partners 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.

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