



PROPOSAL TO

The 2011 National Volunteer Assembly

Presented by:

NVA Diversity Committee

March 7, 2011

CORE TEAM MEMBERS:

- [Darin Smith-Gaddis](#) - Sending Program Specialist, New York Office (Action Item Lead)
- [Rich Dollery](#) - Regional Hosting Manger, Eastern States, Baltimore Office
- [Alex Flood](#) - Scholarships Coordinator, Portland Office
- [Carrie Jacobs](#) - Team Specialist, Portland Office
- [Jim Laden](#) - Organizational Learning and Development Specialist, Portland Office
- [Mary Ann Nation](#) - former Chair and Sending Coordinator Greater LA Area Team
- [José Ruiz-Salas](#) - Chair, Diversity Committee; Sending Coordinator, Sierra San Joaquin AT
- [Megan Shook](#) - Sending Coordinator, Baltimore Area Team
- Betsy Uribe - former Partner Director, Dominican Republic; Sending Volunteer, New Jersey and EZ Pass AT.
- [Kate Wood](#) - Corporate and Foundation Relations Specialist, New York Office
- [Elmer Woods](#) - Sponsored Programs volunteer, Miss Tennky Area Team

OTHERS CONSULTED:

- National Council
- IT Advisory Group
- Hosting Advisory Group
- Volunteer Development Advisory Group
- Orientation Advisory Group
- Sending Advisory Group
- Support Advisory Group
- Mobility International USA (MIUSA)

PART 1: MOTION SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST

MOTION

Move to adopt the AFS-USA Equity and Inclusion Statement:

The mission of AFS-USA is dependent on the quality of our volunteer and participant network. The mission and the preservation and growth of this network requires that AFS-USA strive to extend opportunities to volunteers and participants regardless of their gender, race, sex, age, creed, sexual orientation, religion, veteran or marital status, national or ethnic origin, political opinion, economic and social standing or physical and mental ability.

AFS-USA is committed to providing international and intercultural learning experiences for individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities through a global volunteer partnership. We believe an inclusionary and equitable approach enriches our ability to draw from all voices, perspectives and methods. To this end, we are involved in a number of initiatives to make this a reality and further advance our mission.

AFS-USA affirms its commitment to volunteer equity and inclusion as an asset that enriches individuals, organizations, and society. We believe that international education and exchange deepens our appreciation of the complex contributions of human society as well as our understanding of the consequences of social division. We solicit and encourage each volunteer's contribution to a collaborative organization that welcomes diversity of opinion and positions in its pursuit of shared goals.

As an intercultural exchange organization, we seek in principle and in practice to make AFS-USA increasingly equitable and inclusive, to encourage participation by underrepresented groups at all levels of our organization, and to explore new opportunities to use our inclusiveness as a resource for strengthening our organization and advancing its mission. We pledge to hold ourselves accountable for the pursuit of these goals.

ACTION DESIRED FROM NATIONAL VOLUNTEER ASSEMBLY

We request approval of the AFS-USA Equity and Inclusion Statement.

BACKGROUND OF MOTION

At the 2010 National Volunteer Assembly, delegates were presented with the proposal to create the Diversity Committee. In a near unanimous vote, delegates voted in favor of the committee, recognizing that AFS needed to be more intentional about its pursuit of diversity. The committee's mandate was to collect quantifiable data, examine current practices and understand the communities we do and don't serve. Based on its research, the committee was to return to the

NVA to propose new actions items that would clearly define diversity, identify goals, and outline objective measures of success.

The AFS-USA Equity and Inclusion Statement is the result of that research. If nothing else, the research clearly demonstrates that there is a lot potential for growth. And in order to capture those opportunities, we need to coalesce around a vision. It is in that way that we ensure that our goals and strategies have a solid foundation. There is opportunity and there is potential, and this is the first step.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGES TO THE PROPOSED MOTION? WHY SHOULD THE NVA APPROVE THIS MOTION? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC - ADVANTAGES TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO AREA TEAMS AND LOCAL CHAPTERS, AND TO INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED.

The proposal has several advantages to our organization. Inclusiveness is a thread that runs through the fabric of AFS' being. AFS has continued to provide unique opportunities for parents, students, and volunteers for over 60 years. We know that with open doors, our organization attracts the best and the brightest. This impacts the national organization, area teams, local chapters and individual volunteers.

On one level, an equity and inclusion statement helps us as an organization drive productivity and profitability that can be reinvested in our AFS communities. However, on a broader level, there has always been a sense that we do the right thing. It is this intersection of creating a great place to volunteer and being an organization that is doing the right thing that propels us to provide our programs across the geographies in which we operate.

1. Begins the process of establishing inclusion as an organizational priority as a way of addressing deficits in sending and host families.
2. Provides a foundation for AFS-USA to build partnerships to increase funding for scholarships and recruitment in underserved populations and communities.
3. Encourages a broad range of viewpoints and problem-solving skills for use in AFS-USA programs.
4. Opens AFS to the potential of all volunteers' strengths and presents innovative ideas on the national and local level.
5. Communicates to all audiences that we, AFS-USA, value and embrace the differences of all stakeholders.
6. Attracts interested host families, prospective volunteers and future returnees to an intrinsic AFS-USA value.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST DISADVANTAGES TO THE PROPOSED MOTION? PLEASE BE SPECIFIC – DISADVANTAGES TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION, TO AREA TEAMS AND LOCAL CHAPTERS, AND TO INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED.

1. *Given the current organizational challenges, some may consider this a distraction from addressing these critical issues.*

It is the contention of the Diversity Committee that action will begin to address the biggest challenge: organizational growth. There is a lot of opportunity to increase the AFS footprint, not only in one type of diverse community, but among all diverse communities, including age groups, religious affiliation, ethnic communities and geographic areas. We know this from the low representation in all of these areas among our stakeholders.

2. *Shouldn't our actions speak louder than words? Do we need to spend time and money on statements and reprinting materials when we have DOS compliance issues to deal with and money is tight?*

The Diversity Committee is aware that additional costs are not something the organization can bear at this time. The first level of implementation includes publishing the Equity and Inclusion Statement on the AFS-USA website. As new hardcopy materials are printed, the statement in its entirety or a compact version will be included. This will only impact future advertising and marketing materials for which funding have already been secured.

WHAT ARE THE TWO OR THREE BIGGEST CONCERNS THAT HAVE ARISEN REGARDING THE PROPOSED MOTION AND HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT AFS-USA? HOW COULD THOSE CONCERNS BE ADDRESSED/RESOLVED?

1. *AFS is a diverse organization. If there is genuine concern that we are not getting enough equity and inclusion, then I do not think that a statement will make a huge difference.*

AFS-USA is an organization full of experiential diversity; our volunteers, participants and staff have lived all over the world, and that these experiences fuel our passion for our mission. However this committee believes that we have significant growth potential in certain demographic groups.

Organizational Study Results (2007):

In 2007 AFS-USA conducted an organization study; that study included an online volunteer survey that was emailed to 5,500 volunteers. 1120, or 20% of our registered volunteers answered various questions, including the following on demographics:

- Female (81%)
- Over 45 years in age (74%)
- Caucasian (91%)

Note: Currently, AFS-USA collects demographic information on the volunteer application. The data is limited to date of birth (mandatory), and gender and ethnicity (optional). The average number of volunteers that opt **not** to answer the ethnic question is just under 12%. Less than 200 volunteer opt **not** to answer gender.

We know that in terms of ethnic diversity, little has changed since the 2007 survey was conducted. Our age demographic has seen the greatest change, as of November 2010 our volunteers under the age of 45 increased to 34.4%. It's possible that this trend has emerged due to the creation of the Returnee Initiative Task Force.

2010 - Who are our volunteers in AFS-USA:

- Female (76%)
- Over 45 years of age (64.6%)
- Caucasian (90.9%)

Targeted recruitment and a strategic approach to diversifying our volunteer community are essential to bringing in new individuals. This will help us improve services to volunteers, create a business case which articulates why equity and inclusion are essential in volunteer development, and bring AFS in-line with volunteer organizations that already have stated inclusion and equity goals.

2. *We already have an excellent inclusive mission statement. This proposal will add bureaucratic oversight and cost.*

The AFS Mission Statement does not include language about equity or inclusion. The AFS Core Values and Attributes, which is not available on our website or easily accessible, *acknowledges that peace is a dynamic concept threatened by injustice, inequity, and intolerance. AFS seeks to affirm faith in the dignity and worth of every human being and of all nations and cultures. It encourages respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language, religion or social status.* While, AFS does have a great Mission Statement, a mission statement serves to educate stakeholders and the community at large as to why we as an organization exist, it does not clarify our desire for equity and inclusion. The mission describes what we do and our overall intention. The mission statement is supported by other narratives, including a vision statement, an equity and inclusion statement, a values statement, and strategic goals to communicate purpose and direction to volunteers, students, parents, employees, and other stakeholders.

Our mission statement accurately captures the timeless objectives of the organization. However the mission statement does not, and should not explain the methods used to work toward the mission, as these methods will change as the organization evolves. It is the belief of this committee that organizational growth is paramount to our short term stability and long term success. We believe that an equity and inclusion statement is one tool to enable this growth.

Additionally, the Equity and Inclusion Statement proposed here, describes what the organization believes in and how it will behave. In AFS, our values create a moral compass for the organization

and its stakeholders. This compass guides decision-making and establishes a standard against which actions can be measured. An equity and inclusion statement defines the deeply held beliefs and principles of the organizational culture. These core values are an internalized framework, shared and acted on by all.

3. *Absence from the current mission statement does not negatively impact external view of the organization, and to assume that donors will support AFS solely based on a statement is wishful thinking.*

AFS-USA has a dedicated cadre of corporate and foundation partners who are committed to and interested in funding well-rounded and fully supported equitable and inclusive programming. In order to make AFS-USA's equity and inclusion programming successful, many pieces need to come together - one of which is a strong organizational commitment to equity and inclusion that can be clearly presented to our external AFS-USA stakeholders.

A clear statement of AFS-USA's values regarding equity and inclusion will enable us to communicate effectively and consistently that the principles embedded in our mission and value statements represent a serious commitment to all of our participants, regardless of race ethnicity, economic circumstance, etc. The statement sends a clear message to our external audiences that equity and inclusion are priorities at AFS-USA, which in turn strengthens our capacity to recruit qualified applicants for our programs, which in turn creates exciting opportunities for our funders.

WHAT ARE THE TWO OR THREE BIGGEST CONCERNS THAT HAVE ARISEN REGARDING THE PROPOSED MOTION AND HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT THE LOCAL AFS UNITS AND/OR INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS? HOW COULD THOSE CONCERNS BE ADDRESSED/RESOLVED?

1. *I feel it may cause more divisiveness than inclusiveness, and it will make it difficult to recruit volunteers in my local area.*

One of the most critical reasons for recruiting volunteers from diverse backgrounds is that it helps local teams develop strong multi-dimensional points of reference. Equity and inclusion means involvement by all types of backgrounds, families, and communities which challenge us with new ideas and can help us view old notions from new perspectives. Equity and inclusion will enhance the local chapter or area team's ability to provide a high quality volunteer and participant experience. Inclusion is personal for every single individual. No matter how wonderful it is to be in the confines of one's own community, to understand your own community, you have to see it from the perspective of others.

COST IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING THE MOTION:

The Diversity Committee is aware that additional costs are not something the organization can bare at this time. The first level of implementation includes publishing the Equity and Inclusion Statement on the AFS-USA website. As new hardcopy materials are printed, the statement in its entirety or a compact version may be included. This will only impact some future advertising and marketing materials for which funding have already been secured.

PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TIMELINE

Action	Timeframe for Completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVA Approval 	Apr 10, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish measurable standards by which to evaluate the success of the sharing and internalization of the EI statement. • Integrate statement into the AFS-USA website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Marketing 	June, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin dialogue with stakeholders about the EI statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Communication Committee (volunteer community) ○ Work with Chief Organizational Development Officer (staff representatives) ○ Work with Development Office (donor outreach) ○ Work with community-based organizations (for dissemination to partners) 	Aug, 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As appropriate, integrate statement or condensed version of statement into printed materials as new materials are produced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with Volunteer Development Advisory Group on Volunteer Recruitment Brochures ○ Work with Hosting Advisory Group on 	As New Materials Are Produced

Host Family brochure ○ Work with Sending Advisory Group on Sending Brochure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the success of the sharing and internalization of the EI statement. • Report back to the NVA 2012 	Mar, 2012

PART 3: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[http://www.afswiki.org/w/uploads/c/cf/Organizational Diversity Committee Motion.pdf](http://www.afswiki.org/w/uploads/c/cf/Organizational_Diversity_Committee_Motion.pdf)

[http://www.afswiki.org/index.php/Diversity Committee](http://www.afswiki.org/index.php/Diversity_Committee)

AFS-USA Diversity Statement

2009 Sending Participant Ethnic Breakdown

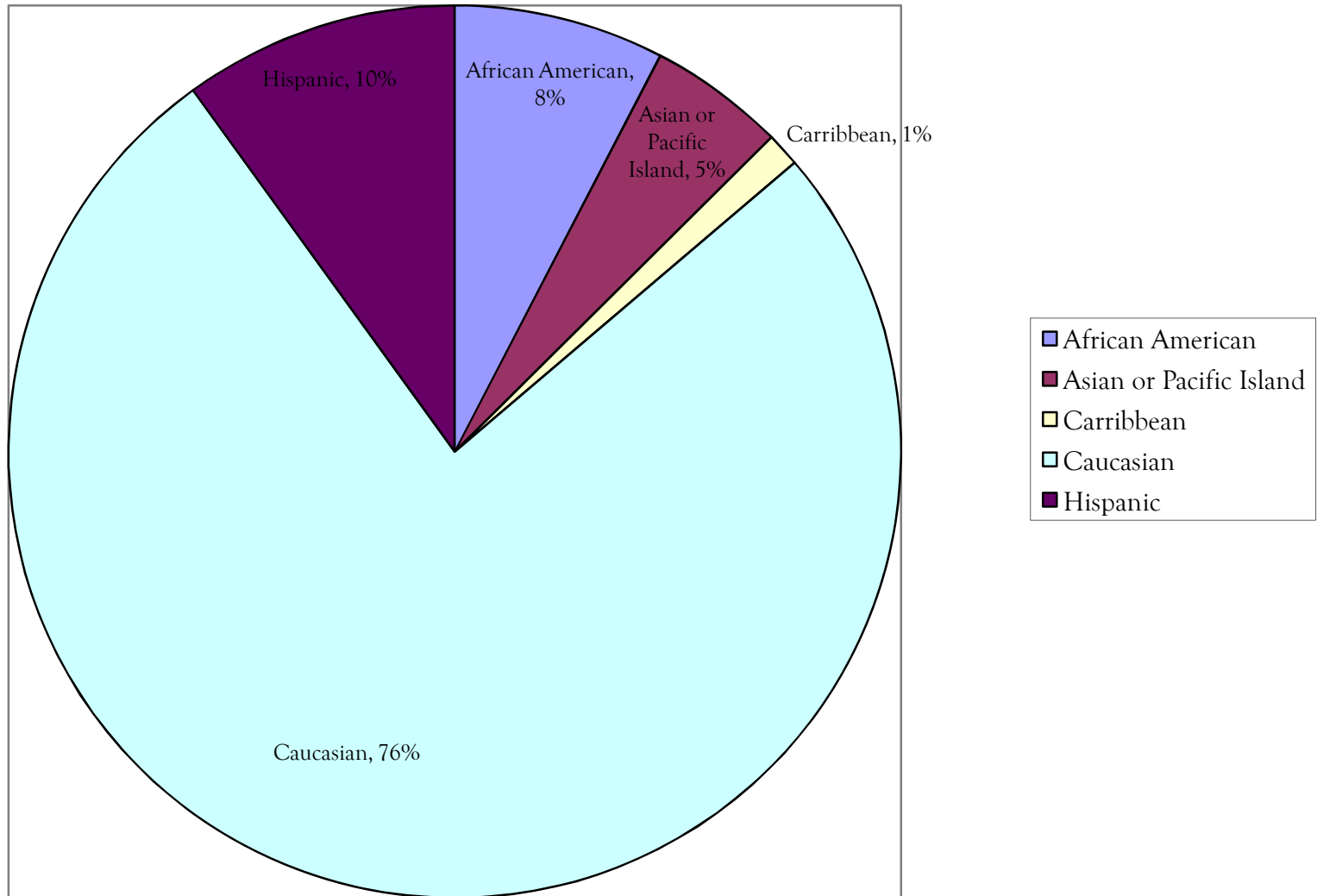
YFU-USA Vision Statement

CIEE Diversity Statement

PART 4: CONCLUSION

Only through a compelling vision and dedicated buy-in will an organization's commitment to equity and inclusion change from passive to active - from expressions of heartfelt intentions to concrete steps towards institutional transformation. Investment in an equity and inclusion statement will represent a logical and positive initial step towards institutionalizing what many AFS constituents have long since internalized - which is an understanding of the value and the importance of a diverse and inclusive AFS-USA community. With a formal statement, AFS-USA's commitment to equity and inclusion is reflected unequivocally.

2009 Sending Participant Ethnic Breakdown



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YFU-USA Vision Statement

Driven by our mission, we commit ourselves to finding new and innovative ways to inspire and engage a growing base of participants inclusive of racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity and increasingly open to all regardless of socio-economic status. Results-oriented, we demonstrate our impact through measurable performance indicators. We value innovation in response to the rapidly accelerating pace of change.

CIEE Commitment to Diversity

Consistent with our mission, CIEE does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, national or ethnic origin, or disability. We are committed to creating opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to participate on our study abroad programs and are involved in a number of initiatives to make this a reality.

We are proud of our long-standing collaboration with Mobility International USA (MIUSA) in advocating participation of students with disabilities in education abroad. CIEE administers the Robert B. Bailey Scholarship for underrepresented groups in study abroad, designed to help defray the cost of participation in an overseas experience for students who might otherwise face financial barriers. To encourage study in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, CIEE collaborates with NAFSA: Association of International Educators in sponsoring the Whole World Committee at our Annual Conference. In addition, CIEE has representation on the advisory board of NAFSA's LGBT-sig (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Special Interest Group).

CIEE also collaborates with NAFSA in sponsoring the bi-annual meeting of SECUSSA's "Committee on Underrepresentation" (formerly the Forum on Underrepresentation), held at our Annual Conference each November.

CIEE and DiversityAbroad.com

CIEE is a member of the Diversity Abroad Initiative CIEE partners with Diversity Abroad. Diversity Abroad is an educational organization whose mission is to ensure that students from diverse economic, educational, ethnic and social backgrounds are aware, have equal access and take advantage of the benefits and opportunities afforded through global education exchanges.