



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures



Intercultural LINK

YOUR SOURCE FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE AFS NETWORK

VOLUME 2- ISSUE 1 - JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011

SUMMER ACADEMY ON INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Enhance your professional and personal competencies

AFS Germany in cooperation with the Karlshochschule International University are offering a new course of ICL workshops in Germany this August.

A limited number of scholarships are available. Hurry! Applications due soon.

See details on page 8.

APPLY NOW!

Intercultural Learning: The Heart & Soul of AFS

MELISSA LILES, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AFS INTERNATIONAL

2011 and the Year of the Rabbit are off to a good start!

For AFS, 2010 was spent laying the groundwork for several ambitious new Intercultural Learning (ICL) initiatives to be rolled out globally. In making these plans, we have taken great strides forward and have garnered enthusiastic support and suggestions from our member organizations across six continents.

One of these AFS network-wide projects that you will soon be hearing more about are our plans to further deepen the ICL

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competencies and knowledge-base of our over 40000 active volunteers and staff who support our participants, programs and mission every day. Another is the creation of the AFS Digital ICL Library, an online resource center to house all of our educational materials worldwide.

I am pleased to share that, thanks to a significant bequest to AFS International, key funding has been secured for these initiatives for this year and next. We thank our many friends and extended “AFS family” all around the globe for their generous and continued support that assists in

strengthening our educational leadership.

In the meantime, this issue of *AFS Intercultural Link*...

- examines some of the many contributions to the intercultural communications field made by Edward T. Hall;
- takes a look at the complex relationship between language and culture. In addition to two articles and several worthwhile external resources, you can contact your local AFS office to get two fun, quick learning activities (hint: use these in the classroom, the workplace or your next meeting) that bring these concepts to life; and



The AFS Core ICL Competency Development Program project committee met in NYC in December

- highlights the Reconciling Babel conference on global citizenship and youth education that our own Intercultura (AFS Italy) is organizing in Milan this April.

In addition to providing you with new materials and insights, we are also happy to alert you to two exciting upcoming opportunities for academic, professional and personal development:

You are cordially invited to attend the 2nd annual Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience, offered this August by AFS Germany in cooperation with Karlsruhochschule International University in Karlsruhe, Germany. See page 8 to learn more about the Academy and scholarship schemes.

And, I hope you will join the large delegation of AFSers who will mingle with peers and experts alike this July at the 35th annual Summer Institute for Intercultural Communications in Portland, Oregon, US, run by our good friends at the Intercultural Communications Institute.

Until then, enjoy this issue and happy learning.

Goodbye, Hello & Congratulations!

We say goodbye and thank you to Aryn Bloodworth who completed her six month internship as manager of this newsletter in January. New AFS Intercultural Link intern Manon Prévost-Mullane will start in April.

Anna Collier has been named Manager of Intercultural Learning Services at AFS International. She will be based in Bellingham, Washington, USA, where she lives and will continue to be a regular contributor to this publication. Please make her feel welcome in her new role!



Anna Collier
Manager of Intercultural Learning Services

Are You our next Intern?

We are searching for a new senior level ICL intern to join AFS International in support of the AFS Core ICL Competency Development Program beginning in July. Have you formally studied intercultural communications theory and practice? Do you have demonstrated curriculum development and adult education management experience? Do you enjoy working and learning in a fast-paced yet fun international environment? If so, and you can commit to spending up to a year in New York City, please send your letter of interest and resume/curriculum vitae to icl@afs.org today.

CONCEPT & THEORIES

How E.T. Hall Shaped the Field and Remains Relevant Today

ANNA COLLIER, MANAGER OF INTERCULTURAL LEARNING SERVICES, AFS INTERNATIONAL

Anthropology + Linguistics + Biology + Ethology + Psychology = Intercultural Communications

The current field of intercultural communication is the result of numerous theorists and practitioners; however, contributions by Edward T. Hall have strongly shaped the field and led it to where it is today.

Hall's intercultural theories combine ideas from the worlds of linguistic relativity (the idea that different languages impact how different cultures think and act; Whorf-Sapir), psychoanalytic theory (Freud), as well as biology and ethology (the study of animal behavior). And, borrowing from traditional anthropology, Hall used the concept of culture as a system of patterns that are learned and analyzable, and applied those patterns to the way we communicate. Following are some of Hall's key contributions.

Higher and lower context communication

Hall believed that context and meaning are interrelated and he placed different cultures on a continuum of high to low context according to how people from those cultures interpret and/or perceive the information that surrounds an interaction or event.

In high-context communication, most of the information is taken from the physical or social surroundings. Higher context cultures do not rely on verbal communication to convey all of the meaning in an interaction. Such cultures are typically found in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and

Latin America. People in these cultures generally have extensive information networks and many close personal relationships. Not a lot of verbal background information is needed in daily interactions, nor is it expected, as people share many similar experiences and expectations for how the world functions.

A low-context message, on the other hand, is one in which most of the message is transmitted explicitly through words. Lower context cultures rely almost entirely on the verbal message, rarely scanning the surrounding environment for additional meaning. Lower context cultures are found in much of Western Europe, as well as the United States and Canada. In these cultures, personal relationships tend to be determined by involvement in certain activities and are not as interconnected as relationships in higher-context cultures. Therefore, there is a greater need for background information to be provided explicitly and by spoken or written communications in daily transactions.

Low Context meets High Context



Nonverbal Communication: Uses of Time - Monochronic & Polychronic

Hall noted that people perceive the passage of time on a continuum, with *monochronic* on one end and *polychronic* on the other. In monochronic systems, time is compartmentalized or broken into discreet units and people complete one thing before moving on to the next. Hall believed that it can be unsettling for monochronic cultures if they have to confront more than one thing at a time. On the other hand, polychronic systems have numerous interactions and/or activities occurring at the same time and people regularly interact in a collective fashion.

Nonverbal Communication: Proxemics or Uses of Space

Hall determined that every culture has implicit rules for how space should be used and that these rules vary from one culture to the next. These unspoken specifications regulate where one works and where one plays, territorial distinctions for different social units (e.g. family, neighborhood, state), as well as acceptable uses of space for men, women, and children, among other things.

Territoriality relates to the organization of physical space, e.g., in an office. Does the president have a large, corner office and does he or she sit behind a large desk, or does the president share the same workspace as his or her staff? If the president has a private office, are staff allowed to occupy it when the president is not using it?

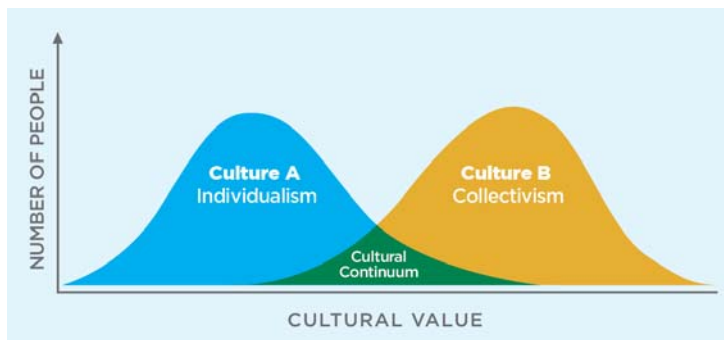
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Personal Space is the distance from other people that one needs to maintain in order to feel comfortable. Hall described personal space as a “bubble” each person carries around with her- or himself at all times. This bubble changes in size according to the situation and the people with whom one interacts (e.g., close friends are allowed closer than strangers) and varies by culture.

Intercultural Communication & Hall

By analyzing the term *intercultural communication* in relation to Hall’s contributions, one can immediately see how central his theories have been. Hall began his career as an anthropologist and in anthropology people generally study all aspects of a culture (e.g., food, dress, lifestyles, etc.), but they only study one culture at a time. These are called *macro-monocultural* studies. However, Hall popularized the idea of comparing specific aspects of different cultures (e.g., use of space in different cultures). These studies are called *micro-intercultural* studies and they are the type of studies that the field of intercultural communication uses today.



What we consider to be a culture’s characteristics and values are actually general tendencies of the people in that culture. In any culture, the majority of people will share certain characteristics; for example, the majority of Germans are low context communicators and the majority of Australians are individualistic. However, there are always people who do not demonstrate their culture’s general tendencies. This is what is shown by the graphic of the double Bell Curve. There could easily be a German who was a higher context communicator than most Japanese and an Australian who was more collectivistic than the majority of Costa Ricans. These people are called cultural deviants.

Many people who are attracted to AFS are cultural deviants. Do you know someone who is? Are you a cultural deviant yourself?

PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES: Reconciling Babel Conference

The Intercultura Foundation in Italy, in partnership with the Universities of Milan and EXPO 2015, is organizing Reconciling Babel - Education for Cosmopolitanism, an international conference about “Global Citizenship” today and related education opportunities for young people.

The conference will be held on 7-9 April 2011 in Milan with specialists from around the world addressing the topic from various perspectives, such as the dialogue of civilizations; the ethics of a globalized world; and education, communication, environment and solidarity.

Conference conclusions will be presented in a public session on Saturday, 9 April, with opportunities for discussion and debate with local and international guests from the education, communications and government fields.

Speakers include Jean Louis Ska, Vishakha N. Desai (an AFS alumnae and CEO of the Asia Society), Fred Dallmayr, Saskia Sassen, Dada Shambhushiva-nanda, and José Pascal Da Rocha among other top thinkers.

Learn more and register at www.reconcilingbabel.org.



“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Nelson Mandela
Nobel Peace Prize Winner

CONCEPTS & THEORIES

Importance of Language in Intercultural Learning

FRANCIS MASON, VOLUNTEER, AFS CHILE

I have been an AFS Chile volunteer for many years, involved in various aspects of the program. Recently, I have taken on the task of explaining more in depth one of the aspects that I consider extremely important in the exchange experience.

The following is a short introduction to a sociological view of the importance of language in the construction of one's world view as one encounters a different culture.

First, one must take into account the difference that exists between learning the meaning of a language and learning its grammatical structure. The former, the sense of structure, or semantic meaning of a language, incorporates the connotation of words and phrases and underlies all grammatical forms, which in turn provides the basis for communication. As a result, in order to understand the meaning of a new language, one must first understand the culture to which it belongs.

Understanding the meaning is not the same as learning the grammatical structures of a language. For example, a child can study Danish in Chile;

nevertheless, the only way this child will be able to understand what “venskab” (friendship) means is by combining his or her own sense of structure (possibilities to imagine oneself in the world) with the cultural meaning of “friendship” in Denmark, which one can only accomplish via personal experience.

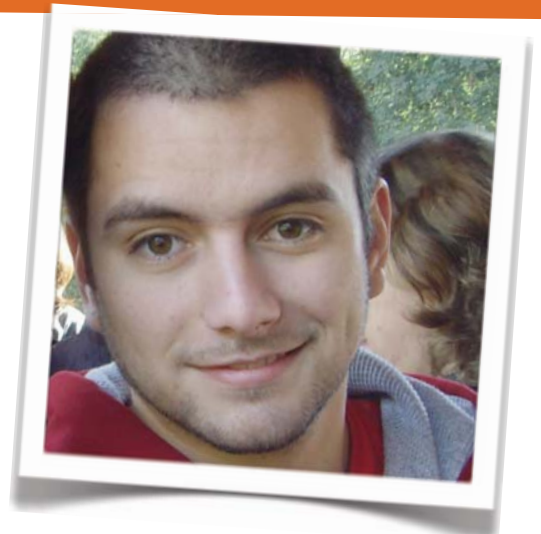
Once this difference is recognized, one can analyze the process of social and/or intersecting interactions that an AFS participant experiences during his or her exchange. What occurs, in principle, is a constant, symbolic interaction (a tension between different attributions for meaning in the context of everyday life—time with friends, family life, school and life—where the use of language is emphasized; different meanings for the same word or symbol).

This is relevant to the AFS experience because it is all developed in a new cultural context. For this reason, the differences in meaning that one

encounters during the exchange experience are converted into new stimuli and, as the months pass, these stimuli broaden the horizon of possible meanings available for each AFS participant (acceptance of difference).

Therefore, intercultural learning, from my perspective based on psychological principles of symbolic interactionism—

“Understanding a foreign language means not having to translate to one's own language, but rather learning to comprehend it through living the culture.”



is the conjunction of distinct attributes of symbolic cultural meaning, which is incorporated by way of experiencing a different cultural context.

The possibilities available to learn new ways of communicating through personal experience permit us to incorporate into our structure of expectations—horizon of meaning—new ways of interpreting the world, new ways of guiding one's actions, which is only possible through the intersecting actions between individuals who perceive the world from different languages.

For this reason, more than just using interactive models such as the Iceberg to explain what culture is, it is necessary for people to understand the importance of learning the language of the host country, going to school, learning to write well and, as corresponds to each individual situation, being responsible regarding house-hold chores, friends, and romantic relationships. In every intercultural situation there are symbolic interactions, which, when confronted in a positive way, will permit the student to better understand cultural life in his or her host country, and to achieve new levels of social and cultural capital, which are characteristics of a citizen of the world.

Key Theoretical References

- Methodological Individualism / Intentional Actions: Max Weber
- Hermeneutics: Hans Georg Gadamer
- Oriented Reciprocal Action / Forms of Socialization: Georg Simmel
- Symbolic Interactionism / Theory of Self: George Herbert Mead
- Challenges of Globalization: Boaventura de Sousa Santos



BEYOND AFS-ICL NEWS

Words in an Intercultural Context

How connections between culture, language, and being (intellectually, emotionally, temporally) influence one another is a topic of ongoing debate in both the intercultural communications and linguistics worlds. Knowing how languages shape cultures and, conversely, how cultures shape language, can help us better understand how we communicate with each other.

Tied to this theme, we highlight here three different discussions that caught our attention.

1

In a recent feature article for *The International Herald Tribune/New York Times* “Sunday Magazine,” social linguist Dr. Guy Deutscher, investigates the following intriguing claim:

“Language routinely obliges you to be attentive to certain details in the world and to certain aspects of experience that speakers of other languages may not be required to think about all the time. And since such habits of speech are cultivated from the earliest age, it is only natural that they can settle into habits of mind that go beyond language itself, affecting your experiences, perceptions, associations, feelings, memories and orientation in the world. ...

“Consider this example. Suppose I say to you in English that “I spent yesterday evening with a neighbor.” You may well wonder whether my companion was male or female, but I have the right to tell you politely that it’s none of your business. But if we were speaking French or German, I wouldn’t have the privilege to equivocate in this way, because I would be obliged by the grammar of language to choose between voisin or voisine; Nachbar or Nachbarin.”

Read the full thought-provoking article, “Does Language Shape How You Think,” online:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/magazine/29language-t.html>

2

The short, beautiful-to-watch video “Words” by W. Hoffman and D. Mercadante / Everyone for National Public Radio (USA) and RadioLab depicts how “language connects our inner thoughts to the outside world.” Its focus is on nonverbal wordplay and makes many cultural references unique to contemporary US culture. How many “words” can you identify and how many connections between them do you see? In just three minutes of video, we found nine words and a whopping 65(!) connections...all packed into this three minute clip. We recommend you watch it at least twice before attempting to count.

Watch “Words” here:
<http://www.radiolab.org/blogs/radiolab-blog/2010/aug/09/bonus-video-words>
 and learn about the related exercise document (page 7) that you can use in trainings or the classroom.

3

“Understanding a foreign language means not having to translate to one’s own language, but rather living it.” So opens AFS Chile volunteer Francis Mason’s blog article, “La Importancia del Lenguaje en el Aprendizaje Intercultural” (“The Importance of Language in Intercultural Learning”). Mason shares with us his reflections on how language learning impacts the profundity of intercultural learning—and reminds of us of the role it plays in the Cultural Goals of the AFS Educational Objectives. He explains the difference between learning “un lenguaje” and “un idioma”; that is, the difference between learning the meaning, or “what,” of a language and the structure and grammar, or “how,” of a language.

Read this article online:
<http://caminocomunicar.blogspot.com/2010/10/la-importancia-del-lenguaje-en-el.html> or read the English version on page 5.

LEARNING SESSION OUTLINE

Two 15-minute ICL Activities

Looking for a quick, fun and out-of-the-ordinary intercultural education activity to use to illustrate the connections between language and culture? *AFS Intercultural Link* to the rescue!

Contact your local AFS organization (find yours at www.afs.org) for materials and guides to two mini-exercises that demonstrate how words, phrases and constructs are tied not only to our personal, but also our cultural identities.

The first uses the stunning sounds and images from the “Words” video profiled on the previous page. In addition to set-up and debriefing instructions, it includes a helpful answers guide.

The second is a simple interactive exercise for which you only need paper, pencils and your imagination. It shows how even two people can easily interpret the same concept very differently – which can be the basis for miscommunication or, in this case, fun and reflection.



PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES

Alvino Fantini to Address South American AFS Volunteers



As a part of AFS’s intensified focus on intercultural communications training and resources for our 40000+ volunteers and staff this year, we will introduce a series of new learning opportunities offered around the world, both face-to-face and virtually.

The second in our virtual events for select AFS volunteers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Paraguay, the is an interactive talk on the importance of language learning in intercultural competency development. The esteemed Dr. Alvino Fantini will share his insights on the topic in a live webinar, offering these AFSers a chance to ask questions and consider how we can better address this critical aspect of our educational offerings.

Dr. Fantini is Professor Emeritus, Language Teacher Education at the SIT Graduate Institute in the US.

PARTNER & NETWORK INITIATIVES

Personal & Professional Learning Opportunities

We are pleased to share with you two rewarding educational opportunities – one taking place in July in Oregon, USA, the other in August in Karlsruhe, Germany. Both are open to the public: while participants come from all professions and fields, the workshops may be of particular interest to those working in the educational and social sectors. Active AFS volunteers and staff can apply for special scholarships; contact your local AFS office for details.

Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience in Karlsruhe, Germany

This is for you if... you are an undergraduate student or individual who has taken an introductory course on intercultural topics and would like to expand your understanding of the intercultural field. The Summer Academy is also a great place to begin the journey of understanding foundational ICL concepts.

In 2010, AFS Germany and Karlshochschule International University offered the first Summer Academy on Intercultural Experience, involving participants and faculty from 15 countries and 5 continents. This year, the Academy will take place during the first two weeks in August, in Karlsruhe, southern Germany (1-12 August 2011).

The program introduces intercultural management and communications topics and is intended to foster intercultural perspectives within the management field as well as help develop applied solutions for societal problems. Classes will be organized in three different tracks:

- Intercultural Communication
- Intercultural Management
- Culture and Society

All courses include complementary theoretical and practical content offered by academic staff and AFS trainers with expertise in international environments. Individuals can enroll for either one or two weeks and can earn up to 6 European Credit Points (ECTS) for successfully completed coursework.

Learn more and register now by visiting www.summeracademy-karlsruhe.org.



Summer Academy
on Intercultural Experience

Summer Academy Scholarships APPLY NOW 30 SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

2011 Tuition Scholarships. A large number of full and partial tuition scholarships are available for all Summer Academy participants, whether from AFS or not. Full scholarships will cover the entire tuition fee of the applicant. Scholars with a partial scholarship will pay €350-400 as their own share. All participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

Please visit <http://summeracademy-karlsruhe.org/index.php/registration/scholarships/> for tuition scholarship applications.

Please direct any questions about the Academy to contact@summeracademy-karlsruhe.org.

Complete your scholarship application before Sunday, 15 May 2011.

Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication (SIIC) in Oregon, USA

This is for you if... you have an intermediate or higher level of ICL exposure (including theory). SIIC courses range from three to five days in length and cover a wide range of topics relevant to the work of AFS, such as

- Resolving Conflict Across the Cultural Divide
- Interactive Experiential Strategies for Intercultural Training
- Values Around the World
- Facilitating Intercultural Discovery

Undergraduate and graduate credits are available through Portland State University's Graduate School of Education/Continuing Education.

Learn more about courses and the Institute at www.intercultural.org/siic.

ACTIVE AFS VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF SHOULD CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OFFICE FOR SPECIAL AFS-ONLY SCHOLARSHIPS.





AFS: Our Mission & 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.

AFS WORLD CONGRESS 2010 Partners Report Back

Many of our organizations were inspired by the educational strategies and content discussions featured at the AFS World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina in late 2010. Several have gone on to incorporate these into their own local events and share highlights with us.

AFS Austria

Our interview of Dr. Darla Deardorff was published in *Intercultura*, AFS Austria's news publication. AFS Austria has also created a new working group to ensure that intercultural learning is included in every workshop and training session it offers. The group will continually collect input from latest research findings, while updating AFS Austria's training scheme.

AFS Costa Rica

During their 2011-13 strategic planning meetings, AFS Costa Rica shared with its volunteers the ten key intercultural learning field trends identified by Dr. Deardorff for AFS in Buenos Aires.

AFS Russia

AFS Russia recently replicated the "Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions" interactive art display from the Congress. They featured this at their February 2011 "Intercultural Learning in Russia and Abroad" seminar in Nizhny Novgorod, which was attended by over 70 participants from 30 Russian cities.



ICL Field Conferences & Event Updates

March	April	Upcoming
<p>APAIE 2011 Conference and Exhibition 9-12 March 2011: Taipei, Taiwan http://www.apaie.org/conference/2011 AFS attending.</p> <p>IMI 12th Annual Conference on Intercultural Relations 10-11 March 2011: Washington DC, USA http://www.america.edu/sis/imi/conference.index.cfm AFS attending.</p> <p>FIGT: Families in Global Transition 17-19 March 2011: Washington, DC http://www.figt.org</p> <p>Constructivist Foundations of Intercultural Communication: Applying the New Paradigm 31 March-2 April 2011: Milan, Italy http://www.idrinstitute.org</p>	<p>The Forum on Education Abroad Seventh Annual Conference 6-8 April 2011: Boston, USA http://www.forumea.org AFS presenting.</p> <p>Reconciling Babel Conference 7-9 April 2011: Milan, Italy http://www.reconcilingbabel.org AFS organizing.</p> <p>SIETAR USA 2011 Conference 13-16 April 2011: Denver, Colorado, USA http://www.sietarusaconference.com AFS attending.</p> <p>Russian Union of Youth & ECYC: International Educational Youth Conference "Europe-Russia-Asia" 19-25 April 2011: Moscow, Russia http://www.ecyc.org</p>	<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>EAIE 2011 Annual Conference September 13-16, 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>

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

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 1- JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011

Call for Submissions

You 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

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