

Kaleidoscope Project Fact Sheet

A new and exciting research study, the Kaleidoscope project, is starting this September 2009. This fact sheet offers a first glimpse of the study.

Research questions

How do people adapt to a new culture? What coping strategies do they use? Do exchange students still use stereotypes? What are the outcomes beyond cultural competence? Does an exchange impact on students' personality? Why are intercultural friendships so important?

Above are just a few of the questions that will be addressed in the research. The study will compare AFS participants with a group of matched peers. Groups will be closely monitored for 20 months (before, during, & after exchange).

What are the benefits for AFS?

- AFS will further its understanding of its intercultural exchanges.
- Partners will receive a full scientific report.
- Findings should receive substantial academic and press coverage.
- Findings can be used in training of both participants and volunteers.
- Findings can be used for promotion & educational content development.

Targeted sample

The study will run during the 2010 SH and NH cycles. We will be recruiting participants from 48 countries from the entire AFS network.

The study will be provided in 10 different languages to provide the greatest coverage of the network.

Who is involved in this project?

The study is fully funded by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council. The project is run and supported by an independent research team based in the United Kingdom. The research team is working closely with AFS International, and individual AFS Partners.

Research team

The research will be lead by Assistant Professor Dr. Nicolas Geeraert at the University of Essex (UK). Nicolas is an AFS returnee (THA, 94-95), and was an active volunteer in AFS-BFL (95-04). The research team is complimented by Miss Kali Demes (PhD student), project assistants and technical staff. The team is collaborating with AFS International.

How will this work?

Participants will be invited to complete an online questionnaire at different time points. Specifically, participants will be surveyed, before, during and after their exchange.

All participants will be entered into a bi-monthly prize draw. Prizes include digital cameras, mp3 players, a laptop and an around the world flying ticket. Each participant will also have the opportunity to receive personalized feedback at the end of the study.

What's next?

An interactive introduction to the project can be found at the project website:
<http://www.kaleidoproject.org>

The first results of the research study are expected in 2012.

