

Inspiring  
Challenging  
Learning  
Discovering  
Transforming

Supportive  
Passionate  
Caring  
Understanding

Trustworthy  
Reliable  
Responsive  
Experienced

Connecting  
Sharing  
Familial  
Bonding

# AFS Interculture South Africa News

JULY 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

## Message from the Chairperson



Dear Volunteers and Staff,

It is amazing how time flies, we are already in the second semester of the year, and the last time I checked we were having Christmas lunch.

I would like to thank everyone who attended the AGA in May; this is a very important event in our organization. We would like to have more Volunteers attending in future once our financial position improves.

It was heartening to see the commitment, and passion of the volunteers who are prepared to take ownership of our Mission and purpose.

***Let's Continue to Wheel The Change!***

Let us all welcome and support **Mangaung Chapter** which was launched on a very cold Saturday 27 June, but people still came to hear about AFS, 29 new Volunteers were registered. Next is Mamelodi on 25 July 2015.

We said goodbye *for now* to our previous Board Chairperson, Mr. Bongani Khumalo, because in AFS you can check out but not leave.



We are grateful for his Leadership as a young person on the Board for almost 10 years.

Message from the Chairperson

About Our Organisation

New Regional Structure

Change Starts Here!

Sawa Sawa Pedi

Annual General Assembly

Mama Lily Award

Mangaung Chapter Launch

Gauteng's first Regional Meeting for  
2015

Mamelodi Chapter Launch

News from KZN

Having Fun!

Our New Sending Coordinator

National Office Hosts 2 IPscNH15  
Chaperones

We Say Goodbye...

## About Our Organisation

AFS is a Volunteer based organisation, therefore our Structure is important in order for us to:

- ✓ Achieve our Mission and Purpose
- ✓ Measure our Performance
- ✓ Support each other
- ✓ Ensure Unity as a strong Partner in the Network.

It is therefore important that we know about every Participant, Host/Sending Family, Returnee, School and other Community organisations in our Chapters.

None of AFS activities should take place outside the Chapters because it is through these Families, Communities, Towns, Cities, Provinces and finally South Africa that our Mission is pursued.

## New Regional Structure

Region	Coordinator	Chapters <i>(To be confirmed/finalized 19 September)</i>
Inland South	Thoko Ngubeni	Soweto, Mangaung, Eldorado Park, Tirisano, Lenasia, and surrounding areas
Inland East	Khumbuza Mbele	Ekurhuleni, Tembisa, Midrand, Daveyton, Benoni and surrounding areas
Inland North	Mmatepeng Temane	Akaso, Atteridgeville, Tshwane East, Tshwane North, Emalaheni, Rustenburg, Phalaborwa, Polokwane, Mamelodi
Inland West	Laurette Holme	Roodepoort, Johannesburg North, West, Krugersdorp, Honeydew, Waverley
Kwazulu Natal	Wendy Svendsen	Pietermaritzburg, Durban, Ballito, la Lucia and surrounding areas.
Western Cape	Mary Van Der Merwe	Cape Town North, Mandalay, Mosselbay, Somerset West, Tygerberg and surrounding areas

## Change Starts Here!



**Change Starts Here!** Is a programme that is almost ready to run as a crowdfunding campaign online.

The aim of the project will be to support shared action both within and across communities in South Africa; that will result in positive practical change and an increase in community cohesion and understanding.

It will work through creating communities of **changemakers** who identify the needs in their own locality, set up **changemaking social ventures** to address those needs, and work with all interested parties to improve the situation.

To date, AFS has been providing changemaking training to some exchange participants that enabled them to create positive change in their communities on their return home.

We also set up the Sawa Sawa programme for volunteers from across the continent to promote regional integration, encourage changemaking, and to link both of these to AFS's statement of purpose "to create a more just and peaceful world".

We are now ready to spread the impact across the whole of the country!

If we hit our funding targets, the first year of the project **Be The Change** will provide a train the trainer workshop for one person from each chapter.

There will then be chapter level trainings in changemaking, and support in setting up a **Changemaking Club** that also includes partner schools and NGOs in the area.

Each of the Changemaking Clubs will look at their own community, what the challenges are, how schools, NGOs, and members of the community can work together to improve the situation.

Each club will be given support, and some seed money, to set up **Changemaking Social Ventures** that are aimed at creating positive change within the community.

For more information, please go to  
**[www.ChangeStartsHereRSA.org](http://www.ChangeStartsHereRSA.org)**

## Sawa Sawa Pedi



AFS Interculture South Africa ran a 12-day pilot programme (the second of four) as part of the Sawa Sawa programme across the four AFS partners in Africa.

It was designed as an introduction to changemaking for volunteers, and ran from Monday 16th March to Friday 27th March.

There were 14 participants in total, 12 African volunteers (3 from Egypt, 1 from Kenya, 4 from South Africa, and 4 from Ghana), 1 German volunteer and 1 Swiss volunteer.

The aim of including European volunteers was to give key partners the chance to see what could possibly be on offer in the future, and to assess the feasibility of running a programme wider than just Africa.

The aims of the programme were to promote regional integration, encourage changemaking, and to link both of these to AFS's statement of purpose "to create a more just and peaceful world".

There were three streams of content throughout the 12-day programme:

**1. Changemaking** – Basic changemaking theory, plus each country group developed a changemaking project to implement on their return home.

**2. Development Issues** – Language, Youth Issues, Gender Issues – The issues were raised through visits to local organisations (e.g. Kliptown Youth Centre, Sonke Gender Justice Etc.) but also looked at common issues across countries.

**3. A more just and peaceful world** – Human Origins, Freedom and Democracy, Regional Integration, Migration and Xenophobia, An Empowering Constitution – This was introduced through a variety of visits (e.g. Walter Sisulu Museum, Apartheid Museum, Maropeng Cradle of Humankind etc.) and, again, we looked at things from a South African perspective and related this to the situations in the other countries.)

Participants stayed with host families in South African communities and were given the opportunity to explore those communities throughout the programme.

The general feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with all participants saying that they would recommend others to participate.

**A massive thank you to everyone** (host families, volunteers and staff) who worked so hard to make this work!

**Sawa Sawa 3 and 4** are in the finalisation stage. Sawa Sawa 3 (Mmiensa) will be held in Ghana from 21 August 2015 to 3 September 2015. The final pilot programme will be run in Kenya from 15th to 28th November 2015.

If any volunteer is still considering applying for either of these programmes, please contact the National Office.

## Annual General Assembly

The 2015 Annual General Assembly took place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at The Aviator located in Kempton Park.

Chapters that attended were represented by 2 people i.e. Chapter Chair and another person to be responsible for Volunteer Development within the Chapter.

Saturday evening was marked by an entertaining cultural evening. Dressed in cultural attire; this was followed by an evening of music and socialising.

## Mama Lily Award

Presented by Mary Mlambo, the Mama Lily Award was awarded to Gill Phillips; a very active volunteer from the Pietermaritzburg Chapter in KwaZulu Natal.

However, Gill was not present at the AGA; Wendy Svendsen accepted the award on her behalf.

## Mangaung Chapter Launch

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, the Mangaung (Bloemfontein) Chapter was launched. The launch took place at the Mangaung Library.

Featuring a YP participant; Juanita Yli-Villamo (hosted in Tembisa) who shared her experience as an exchange student.

## Gauteng's first Regional Meeting for 2015

Thank you to all who attended the Regional Meeting on Saturday the 20th June 2015. The meeting was fruitful and there were great discussions and suggestions.

The next Gauteng Regional Meeting will be on the **19<sup>th</sup> of September 2015** at the National Office.



## Mamelodi Chapter Launch

Mamelodi Chapter in Pretoria (Tshwane) is one of the next AFS Chapters to be launched. The official launch is on **Saturday 25 July 2015**.

**Venue:** Solomon Mahlangu Arts Centre  
**Time:** 12h00 - 15H00

The Chapter Chairperson, Ms. Mmatepeng Temane, popularly known as 'Moeder' joined the organization as a volunteer in 2014 and is the first to bring AFS into the 'Mams' neighborhood.

She is determined to bring awareness and a hype of AFS activities to the vibrant 'Mams'.



**...IPScNH15: Welcoming Germany to Mams...** The Mamelodi Chapter is hosting the IPScNH15 for the first time, with 3 pax from Germany.



Contact Moeder @ 082 804 6533 for more info.



## News from KZN

The New Year got started with some of our students settling in to the new school year and us having to say our good byes to those going home at the end of their year with us in KZN.

At the end of January we welcomed back our IP students who had just spent 2 months abroad having had different Christmas experiences.

The good news came and we were able to congratulate Akona & Karien from Voortrekker High, Nosipho from Russell High, Swelihle from Alexandra High and Jonathan and Mwezi from Maritzburg College. The final countdown then really began and now it's almost time for us to be saying our goodbyes to them.

Another 4 months has passed and we have just said goodbye to Selina, Felix, Regina and Sergio.

All 4 of these students left behind very positive impressions but of real significance was that Sergio was presented with a School Award for his achievement in Afrikaans – a language he had never encountered before arriving in SA.



**Sergio from Mexico on Safari at Mkuzi Game Reserve with his Host Family**

Well Done Sergio, we are very proud of you but I do know no one could be as proud as his host mom & dad and sister Genevieve when they saw him receive his award.



**Sad goodbyes to Felix of Germany from his host family the Govindsamys**

The region also, during this period of time, had the joy of Gill Philips being awarded the Mama Lily Award at the AGA in May.

We are so proud of her achievement. Congratulations Gill! For those who do not know what the Mama Lily Award is, it is the highest award a volunteer in SA can receive in recognition of outstanding and dedicated service to our organisation.

## Having Fun!

Take a look at what fellow AFSer's have been up to:

- **Independence Day Party in the Western Cape**

The Western Cape volunteers had a wonderful Independence Day party on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. All 6 of the returning pax from the USA plus families were welcomed home.

They bid farewell to Jack, a Spanish boy, Seppe from Mandalay and two 18+ volunteers. There are 8 pax about to leave for USA next month; they were each presented with a South African scarf.



**Mary, Isaac and Carol Frieslaar (YES 2014/15 parent of Michaela)**

The AFS vibe was at its best. The volunteers were entertained by the pax and their parents are all happy and appreciative of all AFS offers their children.



*"I am so proud of my Western Cape volunteers. They really go the extra mile for AFS."* – **Mary Van Der Merwe**

- **YPscNH14 Mid-Stay Orientation**

The orientation was held at the Rhino and Lion Park Game Reserve from the 08-09 February 2015.



The aim is for students to reflect about their five months in South Africa. The students and volunteers were happy.



**Mid-Stay Orientation Western Cape**

## • YPscNH14 Departure Orientation

The YPscNH14 Departure Orientation was held at Our Heritage Guest House in Kempton Park from the 09-11 July 2015.



The exchange students have identified a lot of personal changes within themselves.

Host families and host schools hosted farewell parties for them and these created amazing moments.

*"They were no longer International exchange students but South African Students who enjoyed being part of our school system."*

- Boitumelo Mpungose



## • YPbzNH15 Arrival Orientation

The first arrival was on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, the second was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and lastly the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrival was on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April.



The pax are placed in the following projects:

1. Progress Preschool: Soweto Chapter
2. Nkosi's Haven Children Home: JHB South
3. Dinoto Technical High School: Daveyton Chapter
4. Mohau Centre: Pretoria Chapter
5. Makaphutu Children's Village: Pietermaritzburg Chapter
6. Durbanville Children's Home: Cape Town North Chapter.

## Thank You...

**Thank You** to the volunteers that have taken part and assisted during these orientations.

A **Word of Appreciation** goes to all the families and schools who contributed to the successful hosting of the YPscNH14 Cycle.

A Big **"Thank You!"** goes to all volunteers who make hosting possible and continue to make it possible.

**Thank You** everybody for a job well done.

## Our New Sending Coordinator

For those who may not have heard; Sithembile Nkosi joined AFS at the beginning of June; as the new Sending Coordinator.

### Message from Sithembile Nkosi:

It's that time of the year again... we need all the support to get the Sending numbers in and meet the target for participants.

Applications for IP and YPscSH16 sending are still open.

Please get in touch with me on: [sithembile.nkosi@afs.org](mailto:sithembile.nkosi@afs.org) regarding any plans or leads for potential participants or schools.

The **Deadline** for IP School Sending is **15 August 2015**.

**We can make this happen!!!**

## National Office Hosts 2 IPscNH15 Chaperones

### Italy Chaperone



"I am Alice, I come from the North-East part of Italy and I am the Chaperone for the two-month programme.

I became an AFS volunteer immediately after my exchange experience in Finland for the Semester program in 2009-2010 and I am very happy about this new experience in South Africa as Chaperone.

During these two months I hope to help to support students in the best way possible.

I have a lot of energy and I am ready to make it available for the National Office and the Support Department."

### Spain Chaperone



"My name's Begoña Oiz Gil, I come from Pamplona a city in Spain. I am a psychologist and my job has been focused on teaching i.e. Research and Clinical Practice.

I taught at The Distance University in Pamplona until the last academic year, and my Clinical Psychology practice as well.

When I retired, I thought that the accumulated experience and knowledge could be useful to the AFS organization.

Therefore I decided to apply for the annual programme in Africa, because it is my pending subject. I would like to provide all my support and availability for AFS as an organization as well as contribute to the development of a culture of respect and collaboration."



## We Say Goodbye...

We said goodbye to our previous Board Chairperson, Mr. Bongani Khumalo. His leadership as a young person on the Board for almost 10 years is highly appreciated.



### A Thousand Words Is Not Enough

As a means to test if I was functional after the passing of my mother, I stepped on to a plane for 13 hour flight to Paris.

This was a month after I had taken a trip with her to Brazil where she had a cardiac arrest upon landing in Sao Paulo.

*"It had always been my dream to travel with my mother, who had always been fascinated by my travels."*

It was the most heart wrenching experience, to have something that has always brought me so much joy, bring me so much pain.

I was moved by the sheer force of love and assistance from my friends from around the world, trying to assist me as I sat at that ill equipped Guarulhos airport.

My mother and I were on our way to Paraguay to visit a family I had lived with for a year in 2000 as an exchange student. On the evening of this incident I was picked up by a cousin of my Paraguayan family, who assisted me with navigating the Brazilian third world bureaucracy.

The next day my mama from Paraguay and my brother arrived to be with me in this time and assist with the repatriation.

While in the background friends were doing all they could to take care of my family back in South Africa and make sure that my mother's remains are repatriated with ease.

### The Investment

This is when the investment in my travels and global friendships I had made, paid off in a time of grief and despair in a foreign country.

I was 17 years old when I boarded a flight to Brazil en route to Paraguay. I had just been awarded a scholarship to go on exchange through AFS Interculture South Africa.

I had been a volunteer in Soweto at the time, supporting young people from around the world hosted in South Africa for a cultural exchange program.

I was a dynamic curious young person, convinced that there was more to life than my little existence in Soweto; and one needed to seize opportunities as they came along.

In this time I had also been accepted at Wits University for a degree in Geology on a full bursary from AngloGold Ashanti.

I remember not know what to go for and a good friend of mine said to me:

*"Bongani you will never be 17 again and get to spend a year in a foreign country."*

### The Best Advice

The best advice I have ever been given, and what a year it was. I was in a group of 45 teenagers from around the world, the only one from South Africa, to be hosted in local families around Paraguay.

Having lived in apartheid South Africa and seen the transition to democracy; I had assumed that all white people were racist.

It was liberating to be in a country where the colour of my skin was a fascination than a reason to discriminate.

People would rub my head to feel the texture of my hair, they would gather around me to listen to my native language; they would be interested in hearing stories about how we live back in South Africa.

As much as it was a chance to teach about where I come from, it was also a journey of self-discovery.

## The Existence of God

I had been raised catholic and had always believed in the existence of God.

I just could not believe that there were people who questioned the existence of God and the seven day story of how he created the world.

The first response one has when faced with that which is different, is to say my way is better than the other.

This kind of thinking transforms significantly when one immerses himself in the culture of the other, a curiosity to want to understand why people behave the way they do emerges, you even start to question what influenced your long held beliefs.

*"One becomes less anxious about that which is different, instead there is a desire to find out what else could there be in the world that one has not experienced. "*

One also develops an appreciation about which they are what influenced their being. That whom they are is also an offering to the diversity that is the world around us.

Mahatma Gandhi sums it up beautifully when he says:

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."



## AFS Took a Chance on Me

AFS took a chance on me, and gave me a life altering experience.

I do believe that I am a better human being for having been a volunteer at AFS.

I have had a chance to serve as a grassroots volunteer and represented RSA at international forums as a board member.

## The Big Motivation

The big motivation for me has been the tremendous work done by the volunteers; who facilitate an intercultural learning experience for the hundreds of young people who get hosted in our country.

Each volunteer, host family, hosting school, consulate official, staff member, board member; does an important task of helping others learn how to live together.

It is for this reason that growth becomes a non-negotiable for our organisation. Growth comes in the form of a growing volunteer base.

A volunteer base knowledgeable about intercultural learning; increased number of participants coming to our country; a bigger pool of host families; a bigger network of schools we deal with and a growing presence where we are not.

*"I may have stepped down as a board member, but I remain a dedicated volunteer of AFS."*

**An Organisation I Love.**

