

Concept Note

As of February 22, 2019

AFS Intercultural Programs, with distinguished partners, is convening the second annual **AFS Global Conference: Active Global Citizenship—and How to Educate for It**, from 9-11 October 2019 in Montreal, Canada. [The call for session proposals is open until 15 April 2019.](#)

The **2019 AFS Global Conference** will mobilize educators, non-profits, businesses, governments, and youth leaders to move beyond theoretical and ideological debates in order to find common ground and work together to **integrate global competence into formal, non-formal and informal education for learners of all ages.**

The Conference will respond to these questions:

- What does active global citizenship look like in practice? What are active global citizens doing to change the world for the better?
- How does global competence education lead to active global citizenship? How does global competence factor into developing and implementing solutions to challenges identified in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- What is the state of global competence education around the world? What can we learn from Canada as a pioneer in global competence education?
- How do we evolve education from a 20th-century model to meet the needs and demands of the 21st century and the Fourth Industrial Revolution?
- What best practices, innovations, obstacles, and challenges exist in educating for active global citizenship? How can others learn from and replicate these successful strategies?
- What are the interests and the role of each stakeholder group in achieving the best results for educating, advocating, and funding active global citizenship?
- How can stakeholders collaborate to best empower and support active global citizens and those educating for it? How can advocates work together to meet the needs of various stakeholder groups?
- Where should the funding come from to ensure more schools and youth groups incorporate global competence education? What are the drivers and incentives to allocate current educating funding to global education and/or to raise new funds from impact investors and donors?
- How can we educate for active global citizenship at a time when the benefits of globalism are being questioned by countries and peoples, yet our challenges and opportunities are globally interdependent?

Who will attend the Conference?

Over 600 active global citizens and the stakeholders who support their development are expected to participate in the AFS Global Conference. This includes:

- **Educators of all types:** teachers and academics as well as experts in global competence education, non-formal learning, and international education
- **Business leaders, social entrepreneurs, and innovators**
- **Policymakers and government representatives,** including international governing bodies
- **NGOs, community organizations**
- **Media** representatives and **influencers**
- **Youth** leaders and students
- **Faith** leaders and interfaith organizations
- **Foundation** donors and impact investors
- **AFS and Sentio Network** leaders and volunteers from around the world

Why attend the AFS Global Conference?

As a 104-year-old global not-for-profit with a mission to use intercultural learning to help create a more just and peaceful world, AFS is a leading advocate for global competence education to be integrated into formal, non-formal and informal education programs for students and young adults worldwide.

We are deeply concerned that the world has become increasingly divided. Nations and societies that previously encouraged cooperation are moving toward greater isolation precisely at a time when our shared challenges and opportunities require collaboration and diversity.

- Global citizenship education focusing on cultural diversity and tolerance are reported as a mandatory part of curricula in [68% of countries](#) today, but there is a question about whether this translates into practice in classrooms and out-of-school spaces.
- [40% of employers](#) globally find it difficult to recruit people with the skills they need. At the same time, only [36% of millennials](#) (people ages 25 to 35) believe they have the skills and knowledge they'll need to thrive in their careers. And [65% of children](#) entering primary school today will end up with jobs that do not exist yet but that will require unprecedented collaboration. [Research forecasts](#) major shortages of skilled employees and a surplus of under-trained workers in developed and developing economies if education fails to adequately prepare young people with the evolving demands of the 21st-century workplace and the fourth industrial revolution.
- Various [studies](#) show that Gen Z (people ages 15 to 25) are very global in their thinking and interactions, carry a sense of responsibility, and expect diversity. AFS' [global survey](#) of Gen Z towards international education found that 66% are motivated by cultural exploration rather than academic reasons and seek out authentic intercultural experiences.

- [Educational inequality](#) and [low enrollment rates](#) are shown to result in higher risks of conflict and wars.
- [International cooperation](#) is essential for tackling climate change and global environmental issues while ensuring that global economy develops in a way that provides opportunities for all, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged.

Conference benefits

With this Conference, AFS seeks to empower more individuals and institutions to actively work towards advancing global understanding, transforming their communities and the world—and solving our most pressing challenges as outlined by the [United Nations SDGs](#).

You should join this event if you want to learn from, share your own insights, and network with global leaders of education, business, government, and the civil sector.

This Conference is a good fit for those interested in moving from commitments to actions, people who are ready to work on solutions for making global competence a staple of education systems and practices worldwide.

Background

In 2018, AFS convened the inaugural AFS Global Conference on *Global Competence: Our Future, Our Responsibility* to build a coalition of stakeholders committed to significantly increase access to global competence education for young people around the world. Gathering more than 450 stakeholders in Budapest, the 2018 AFS Global Conference made it clear that global competence education advocates need to:

- **Amplify the urgent call to action.** At a time when globalism is under attack and nationalism is on the rise, we need more—not fewer—active global citizens who ensure that global and local communities alike respect diversity, embrace inclusiveness and work together to address the world’s most pressing challenges.
- **Empower the education community** to integrate global competence education into school curriculums worldwide and prepare students to navigate an increasingly diverse world.
- **Build stronger coalitions** with policymakers, businesses, social entrepreneurs and funders to make global competence education a reality in schools, youth groups, NGOs and workplace professional development programs.
- **Collaborate with young people**, our most important stakeholders, to ensure global competence education supports and strengthens their determination to make a meaningful impact on the world.

The call for session proposals is open until 15 April 2019

To find out how you can contribute to this impact-focused conversation in Montreal, Canada 9-11 October 2019, visit conference.afs.org or contact events@afs.org.