

AFS Youth Assembly
Alumni Impact Network
Annual Report

2025



Foreword

A Message from AFS Leadership

“”

A vibrant platform where the incredible talent, passion, and diverse experiences of Youth Assembly alumni could continue to thrive and generate meaningful impact worldwide.

Dear Friends,

It is with immense pride and excitement that we share the inaugural progress report for the AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network. This initiative, launched in January 2025, represents a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to empowering young leaders and fostering a global community dedicated to positive change.

The AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network was born from the vision of creating a vibrant platform where the incredible talent, passion, and diverse experiences of Youth Assembly alumni could continue to thrive and generate meaningful impact worldwide. We are thrilled by the enthusiasm and engagement we've witnessed since its inception.

This report highlights the foundational steps we've taken, the initial successes we've celebrated, and the inspiring ways in which alumni are already leveraging this network to collaborate, innovate, and lead. It is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Youth Assembly and the profound potential that lies within this connected community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all who have contributed to the early success of the Alumni Impact Network, especially to our wonderful Impact Coordinators who have done amazing work in a short amount of time! Your dedication is shaping a powerful force for good, and we look forward to its continued growth and impact in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Daniel Obst

President and CEO,
AFS Intercultural
Programs



Helmut Schuster

Chair, AFS Youth
Assembly Global
Leadership Council

A Global Movement for Youth-Led Action

About the Youth Assembly

The AFS Youth Assembly brings together the world's foremost young leaders and changemakers to transform their vision for a better world through innovative action. It is a key part of the AFS program portfolio, empowering the next generation of leaders by offering opportunities to connect with peers, trailblazers and influencers while developing their global competence and problem solving skills. The AFS Youth Assembly annually attracts between 700 and 900 participants from over 100 countries.

About the AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network

The Alumni Impact Network for the AFS Youth Assembly helps foster youth-led action and impact on the ground with the goal to build a movement of active young leaders and changemakers globally.

Impact Coordinators (ICs) play an important role leading youth action and impact in their respective regions. They help strengthen our connection with alumni and empower youth to tackle local problems through a global perspective. **Impact Coordinators spearhead action and impact in their region, provide mentorship support, connect alumni to essential resources, foster an environment of community and collaboration among alumni, and promote impactful work by alumni.** They lead the next movement for global action and impact communities across the globe. The Alumni Impact Network is supported by nine Impact Coordinators who represent six regions: Africa, Asia and Oceania, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (LATCAR), Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and North America.

About the report

The year 2025 served as the foundational launchpad for the AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network, transitioning a global community of ideas into a coordinated engine for youth-led action. Launched with the explicit mission to foster action and impact on the ground, this Network has demonstrated that when young leaders are provided with structure, capacity, and consistent support, they can effectively confront and solve complex global challenges, from climate justice to persistent inequalities.

This inaugural report highlights the decisive shift made by our Impact Coordinators (ICs) to build trust and sustained engagement within the global alumni community. Our approach moves beyond minimal involvement, focusing instead on meaningful engagement and collaboration with highly committed alumni, recognizing that our collective power lies not merely in the over 20,000 alumni we serve, but in the measurable impact of localized, sustainable change, directly contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This report is a labour of love, evidence of impact, and a statement of the strategic imperatives for scaling this movement. It underscores our commitment to strengthening youth leadership that is empowering, accountable, innovative, globally aligned, and dares to make a positive difference.

AFS Youth Assembly

More than 90% of delegates come from outside of North America & Europe. Participants come from Africa, Asia, LATCAR and the Middle East.



Participants by age range



Dream and Impact tour equips young people with the skills, mindset, and tools they need to lead change in their communities through purposeful action, social entrepreneurship, and sustainability

Participants by gender



The world
needs more
Active Global
Citizens:
**AFS helps
create them.**



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Introduction

At the AFS Youth Assembly, we do not assume that global citizenship is an innate trait. Instead, we are intentional about inculcating it through structured programming. We see this in action through leaders like Odunayo Aliu, who worked with a group of educators to raise changemakers in Arikanki village, and Anisa Nor, who aligned her agricultural project with global citizenship education to advocate for collective impact solutions among women farmers in Lempake. The Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network empowers young leaders to drive high-impact local solutions through a global lens. This report will take you into the action and impact journeys of our alumni who have attended the AFS Youth Assembly from 2022-2025. The report covers all of the inspiring activities and initiatives taking place in the network, upholding the AFS vision for a more peaceful, just, equitable and sustainable future.

While alumni tackle every issue from climate change to gender equality and peace, quality education (SDG 4) remains the single most consistent priority across our Alumni Impact Network, reaffirming education as the universal currency of the AFS mission. This is reflected in the 2025 Declaration of Impact, where alumni from Africa committed to confronting the “absence of quality education,” LATCAR prioritized education alongside poverty reduction, MENA demanded access to modern schooling, and North America identified uneven access even in resource-rich countries. In regions facing systemic infrastructure gaps, education is often a survival mechanism. This is evidenced by alumni projects like TWEENS in Zimbabwe led by Olive Iragena, which helps refugees retake national exams and secure international scholarships, and Tshogfatso Molapo’s WhizzBang Chemistry project in South Africa, which increased student interest in science by 85% to address critical regional skill gaps.

The success of these initiatives is driven by our regional Impact Coordinators (ICs), who successfully transitioned the network from its foundational stage to a phase of active leadership and progress tracking by mid-2025. What sets these leaders apart is the human element they bring to changemaking; they prioritize one-on-one check-ins that address not only project metrics but also alumni well-being. By actively mitigating “imposter syndrome” and providing emotional intelligence alongside technical mentorship, ICs have transformed the network into a functional accelerator for the SDGs. This multi-layered strategy, combining personalized follow-ups with strategic seed funding, has created a consistent, high-impact model that continues to yield impressive results. The report concludes by outlining remaining challenges, key learnings, and the network’s priorities moving forward.





Global Impact Metrics Snapshot

Alumni 2022-2025

- In 2025 at the 30th AFS Youth Assembly, the Network committed to the **Declaration of Impact**, a roadmap that outlines shared priorities and actions to guide its collective efforts moving forward. Each region identified a distinct focus to help guide activities for alumni.
- **9000+ direct beneficiaries** through initiatives funded by our **Impact Network Fund** tackling SDG 4, 5, 10, 13, 16; **108k people impacted through digital products** under the Fund, tackling SDG 3 & 4
- **16 projects** have been awarded grants through our **Impact Network Fund for a total of \$7300** in 2025
- **75 alumni** with projects have directly benefited from **mentoring and guidance facilitated by our Impact Coordinators**
- **5 virtual Regional Meetups** took place in 2025
- **8 Alumni** have been featured in the Alumni spotlight regionally
- **2,530 alumni** actively engaged across social media platforms
- A landmark **cross-regional pilot, The GYRA project** was successfully created and launched, demonstrating the network's capacity to support complex, multi-regional collaborations.
- **Ten Young African Leaders** successfully completed their impact journey through the **Sir Cyril Taylor Young African Leaders Program 2025**, generously supported by the **Cyril Taylor Charitable Foundation**.
- Steady **contribution to environmental sustainability** evidenced by alumni initiatives that have **benefited 712 households** and facilitated transition to clean energy and proper e-waste management; **107,000+ people impacted by aggregated education-related projects** across the network.
- **Alumni giving back** to the community provided access to **20 young people** to participate in the AFS Youth Assembly.
- An **Alumni monthly newsletter** was launched in September 2025 to offer regular updates on alumni activities taking place globally, career development, mentorship, volunteer, internship, and grant opportunities.

The Network committed to the **DECLARATION OF IMPACT**

9,000+ **Direct beneficiaries** through initiatives founded by Impact Network Fund

16 **Projects** awarded grants



75 **Alumni with projects** benefited from mentoring and guidance facilitated by our Impact Coordinators

107,000+ **People** impacted by aggregated education-related projects

GYRA Project Successfully created and launched



2,530 **Alumni** engaged across social media



20 **Young people accessed the AFS Youth Assembly** through alumni giving



ALUMNI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER launched in September 2025

5 **Virtual Regional Meetups**

10 **Young African Leaders** successfully completed their journey through the Sir Cyril Taylor Young African Leaders



Declaration of Impact

The launch of the Declaration of Impact at the 30th AFS Youth Assembly in New York City represents a pivotal moment for the Alumni Impact Network. It set the stage for a multi-regional roadmap for sustainable development. Framed under the theme “Defying Adversity: Empowering Young Global Citizens to Lead,” the declaration was created by over 500 young leaders from 84 countries who participated in the conference. The Declaration of Impact serves as a comprehensive blueprint for youth-led action, designed to operationalize our contribution to social development through localized, high-impact initiatives.

It establishes a baseline for regional cooperation, emphasizing that challenges such as inequality, lack of access to quality education, and conflict require courage, partnership and synergy. By formalizing these intentions, the network has created a mandate to move beyond rhetoric into measurable blueprints for action.

The Declaration is founded on specific regional pillars. Each addresses the unique socio-economic pressures of its geography. Our data from the reporting period provides concrete evidence that these declarations are being successfully translated into ground-level outcomes.



THE 30TH AFS YOUTH ASSEMBLY DECLARATION OF IMPACT

Background and Purpose

More than 500 young leaders from 84 countries gathered in New York City from August 8–10, 2025, for the 30th AFS Youth Assembly, united under the powerful theme: “Defying Adversity: Empowering Young Global Citizens to Lead.”

In an era where global challenges like climate change, inequality, and conflict transcend borders, collaboration across sectors and communities is more essential than ever. As the world calls for urgent action, young people are rising to meet the moment, driven by their energy, creativity, and determination to build a better future.

Recognizing this potential, the AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network harnesses the power of youth leadership to advance meaningful solutions and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

At this milestone Assembly, the Network proudly commits to the **Declaration of Impact**, a roadmap that outlines shared priorities and actions to guide its collective efforts moving forward. This declaration stands as both a promise and a call to action to lead with purpose, collaborate across borders, and drive meaningful change starting within every region of the world.

This declaration begins with a global commitment followed by regional declarations to meet the specific needs and priorities of each region.

Global Declaration

We, the youth of every corner of the world, stand united in purpose and resolve. From Europe to Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, North America and the Middle East, our dreams are not just visions. They are blueprints for action. We believe that the challenges of our time demand more than words; they demand courage, partnership, and a commitment to justice, peace, and sustainability. Alone, we can make a difference. But together, we can transform the world. Today, at the 30th AFS Youth Assembly, we declare our readiness to work tirelessly across borders, to hold power to account, to lift each other up, and to create a future that reflects the dignity and hope of all humanity.



Region of Africa Declaration

We, the youth of Africa, stand united in our commitment to collaboration, consistency, and intentional action, determined to seize and create opportunities that shape a better future. We are empowered and equipped to confront the challenges of poverty, the absence of quality education, and the persistent inequalities faced by women and girls—driving lasting change across our communities and beyond.

Region of Asia and Oceania Declaration

We, the youth of Asia and Oceania region, believe that while individual efforts bring in the momentum, it is through collective action that true transformation happens.

Together, we are stronger, our voices louder, and our impact even greater. Unity is the key to creating a future that reflects us all as one. It's easy to go alone—but together, we can change everything. Going forward, we will collaborate across our regions to create lasting change and work toward **eradicating misinformation and disinformation to build trust and solidarity**.

Region of Latin America and the Caribbean's

We, the youth of Latin America and the Caribbean, commit to using our dreams as bridges for social impact. Aware that we are agents of change, we will work tirelessly to transform our communities. While we support all of the SDGs, we are especially focused on **quality education, ending poverty, gender equality, and sustainability**. Together, through shared knowledge and genuine passion, we aim to create lasting change for our generation.

Region of Europe Declaration

We commit to holding European actors responsible for their actions, both within and outside of Europe. As the region of EUROPE we will tackle the lack of responsibility of big companies and their affiliates regarding **human rights and sustainable climate policies**.

Region of Middle East and North Africa Declaration

On behalf of the youth of the Middle East and North Africa, we declare that our generation will no longer be defined by the barriers we inherit, but by the futures we create.

We demand access to quality education that equips us for the world we live in, platforms to lead in decision-making, and opportunities to turn our ideas into action. We have seen how talent is lost not for lack of vision, but for lack of access, mentorship, and connection. We pledge to bridge these gaps ourselves and we call on the global community to stand with us. We are not the leaders of tomorrow; we are the change-makers of today and our impact will not wait.

Region of North America Declaration

North America is a region with extraordinary resources. Yet, access to quality education is uneven, and youth mental health is under strain.

Artificial intelligence, the most powerful tool of our time, can help us change this and tackle the challenges ahead - and with the resources we have, it is our responsibility to ensure every community, no matter how big or small, moves forward.



Our Alumni Impact Network Fund

The AFS Youth Assembly Impact Network Fund is a seed funding initiative designed to support impactful projects and initiatives by Youth Assembly alumni. Its objective is to provide financial support of up to \$1,000 USD for youth-led projects that address critical community challenges and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Within the 2025 cycle, over 20 alumni were nominated for funding by ICs to scale existing projects and move projects from theoretical design to on-the-ground implementation. The selection process is rigorous from nomination to a detailed application to request funding.

To date, the disbursement strategy has focused on awarding many moderate-sized grants (typically \$200–\$1,000, depending on project stage and need) to meet demand and reach a wide range of regions. A total of \$7,300 in funds has been disbursed over the reporting period.

As of the current reporting period, 16 projects have successfully received funding. Four additional projects have been approved to receive funding in early 2026. These projects demonstrate high alignment with the SDGs. It is instructive to note that the Fund also earmarks specific amounts to support initiatives directly led by the regional ICs like the landmark GYRA Project.

Alumni Impact Network Fund Recipients 2025

Wishes of Hope

Daniela Diaz - Colombia

Granting life-changing wishes to children with critical or terminal illnesses in Cartagena

SDG 3 | *Good health and wellbeing*

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Global Maheela

Rama Budhathoki - Nepal

Social business supporting women and orphaned youth affected by migration through entrepreneurship and wellness

SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 17

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Beyond Awareness

Kwamena Hammond - Ghana

A virtual campaign reframing mental health as a social and economic issue for marginalized African youth

SDGs 3, 4, 8, 10

Funding Received: 500 US\$

TWEENS

Olive Iragena - Burundi

Peer tutoring, mentorship, resource provision for refugee students in the Tongogara settlement

SDG 4, 10

Funding Received: 350 US\$

Affective Automation

Noah Khan - Canada

A web-based training series for AI workers to integrate emotional intelligence into sustainable tech development

SDG 4, 7

Funding Received: 500 US\$

ImpactGen

Kiran Raj - Pakistan

A youth-led movement providing educational awareness and challenging harmful social norms in remote Pakistan

SDGs 4, 5, 13, 16

Funding Received: 250 US\$

Cyanovation

Sophie Fasshauer - Germany

Cyanovation is developing a sustainable, microbiological approach to e-waste recycling using bacteria to recover valuable metals like palladium. With over 62 million tons of e-waste generated in 2022 and only 22.3% recycled, the company aims to make recycling easier and more accessible for OEMs and recycling entities, driving a planet-positive future

SDG 12

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Nexfuels

Prince Nana Kow Essel - Ghana

Production of clean-burning bioethanol cooking fuel from organic waste to improve public health and reduce deforestation

SDGs 2, 3, 7, 13

Funding Received: 200 US\$

Alumni Impact Network Fund Recipients 2025

Mayan Youth and Sustainable Food Systems

Damian Borges - Mexico

Promoting agroecology and the conservation of native seeds among Mayan youth in Yucatán

SDGs 2, 3, 12

Funding Received: 400 US\$

Empowering Lempake's Women Farmers

Anisa Nor - Indonesia

Training women farmers in green job transformation and circular economy practices to build environmental resilience

SDGs 4, 5, 8, 10, 12

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Sababu

Santiago Aguilera - Mexico

Developing school infrastructure and providing educational materials for rural preschools in Tanzania

SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 10

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Dream & Impact

Hugo Osorio - UK/Colombia

A national tour across 11 Colombia cities providing leadership training and university-level certification

SDG 4, 5

Funding Received: 600 US\$

Speech Spark

Komlan Braly - Togo

A teacher-led model addressing learning poverty through structured pedagogy and social-emotional learning

SDGs 4, 5, 10, 13, 17

Funding Received: 500 US\$

Girls, Say Yes

Mohammad Shadab - India

Empowering girls in rural India through digital literacy, mentorship, and career readiness workshops

SDGs 4, 5, 10

Funding Received: 500 US\$

The Global Youth Responsibility Alliance (GYRA) Project

Anita Bondzie, Joyceline Kwarko, Ayomide Ajagbe, Vaishnavi Dubey - Ghana, Nigeria, India

A cross-regional digital campaign facilitating exchange on social, economic and political issues

SDGs 1, 4, 10, 13

Funding Received: 1,500 US\$

China Health Pulse Newsletter

Ruby Wang - United Kingdom

China Health Pulse is a newsletter and podcast platform created to make sense of China's growing role in global health through timely, accessible and human-centred analysis

SDGs 3

Funding Received: 500 US\$



The Nexfuels Project: advancing clean energy solutions for cooking in communities across Ghana.



Global Maheela creates economic and emotional pathways for vulnerable women and orphaned youth through training, production and global market access.

The

**China
Health
Pulse**

Podcast
with Dr Ruby Wang

Prof. Kerry Brown
Director, China Lau Institute
King's College London



**Starmer in Beijing:
Health, Science &
Europe-China Relations**



China Health Pulse is a newsletter and podcast platform created to make sense of China's growing role in global health through timely, accessible and human-centred analysis.



Mentorship & Guidance

The mentorship recorded across these regions is not strictly technical; it is holistic, human, and deeply personal. Impact Coordinators (ICs) have documented that mentorship is often required to help young leaders navigate the external systemic barriers and internal psychological hurdles such as imposter syndrome. These mentorship touchpoints also serve as an intake mechanism for the Impact Network Fund.

In instances where proposal reviews and technical advice were provided, ICs ensured that these projects were structurally sound, SDG aligned, and comply with funding requirements. A total of 75 alumni received direct guidance, with the MENA region leading at 25 mentored individuals, followed by Africa at 21. The remaining distribution includes Asia and Oceania (12), LATCAR (8), North America (5), and Europe (4).

Region	Alumni Supported
Africa	21
Asia & Oceania	12
Europe	4
LATCAR	8
MENA	25
North America	5
TOTAL	75



The ImpactGen project empowers vulnerable women farmers in flood-prone Lempake village by combining environmental resilience, gender equity, and community-driven innovation to strengthen livelihoods and influence local policy.



Alumni Spotlight

Our global network is a community of leaders and educators dedicated to building a more sustainable world. We celebrate alumni who have turned their Youth Assembly experience into a lifelong commitment to social impact. Their stories demonstrate that whether they expanding access to education or pioneering environmental solutions, our alumni are the heart of real, lasting change in their own communities.



AFRICA



Komlan Abalo Braly
Togo

Komlan Abalo Braly is a multi-award-winning educator transforming education across West Africa through teacher-led innovation. As a 2026 Global Teacher Prize Top 50 Finalist and developer of Speech-Spark pedagogy, he has reached over 3,000 learners and trained 200 Master Teacher Trainers who support teachers nationwide. Starting as a volunteer in an under-resourced rural Tchitchao High School, Komlan pioneered an approach blending Structured Pedagogy and Social and Emotional Learning that raised literacy by 25% and exam pass rates by 35%. His school became the first high school globally to win the 2024 UNESCO Hamdan Prize for Teacher Development. As a AFS Youth Assembly Delegate | Global Educators, Global Schools Advocate, One Million Leaders Africa Mentor, and AU/CIEFFA alumnus, he champions girls' education, climate action, and sustainable development. His Speech-Spark mode, featured in HundrED 2026 Global Collection and endorsed by Togo's Ministry of Education, proves that empowered teachers can transform education systems from within. In 2025, he received the Global Sustainability Award.

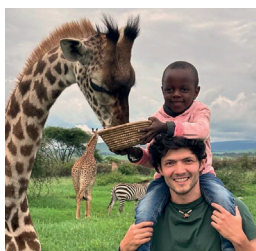


Nana Kofi Sarpong
Ghana

Nana Kofi Sarpong (Hendrix) is a circular economy entrepreneur tackling post-harvest losses through technology, aggregation, and green energy. He leverages digital platforms and climate-smart systems to connect farmers to stable markets while ensuring households and restaurants access affordable, high-quality produce. Nana Kofi's work has impacted over 1,000 farmers, expanding their income opportunities through reliable market access. Recognised by the European Union, the British Royal Family, the AFS Youth Assembly, and AGYLE Germany's 40 Under 40, he is committed to reshaping Africa's food systems.



LATCAR



Santiago Aguilera
Mexico

Santiago Aguilera has a background in finance and is the founder of Sababu, a social impact initiative he started after spending six months volunteering at a rural preschool in Tanzania. While teaching young children, he saw the urgent need for better school infrastructure and resources, which inspired him to create Sababu. The project raises funds through community-driven initiatives—like selling date bread—to support school construction, infrastructure improvements, and access to quality education in Tanzania, while sharing stories to raise awareness and deepen impact. In addition, Santi collaborates and volunteers with other organizations in Mexico to support education and social initiatives locally.



MENA



Manar Alanazi
Saudi Arabia

Manar Alanazi is an active leader in youth diplomacy and a pioneer in global leadership and international cooperation. She holds a Master's degree in French Translation and a diploma in youth leadership. Manar has played a central role in developing youth initiatives, especially in women's empowerment, driven by her belief in the new generation's ability to shape a brighter future. Manar has designed initiatives focused on youth empowerment in line with SDGs 4, 5, 13, and 17. She also served as an ambassador promoting Saudi tourism at Expo Dubai 2021. Manar was awarded the Medal of Excellence and Innovation in Youth Work by the GCC General Secretariat and continues her efforts to advance youth development, following her principle: By and For Youth.



ASIA & OCEANIA



Anisa Nor
Indonesia

Anisa Nor is a social development practitioner and researcher working at the intersection of circular economy, gender equity, and inclusive green transition in Indonesia. Currently, as Research Director at Catalyst of Change, Anisa leads community-based initiatives that empower women waste workers through social entrepreneurship, capacity building, and sustainable waste management solutions. Anisa is doing a Master's degree in Global Development at Cornell University, and is passionate about advancing locally driven, climate-just solutions for marginalized communities.



Kiran Raj
Pakistan

Kiran Raj, from Pakistan, is an AFS alum whose journey with AFS has been truly transformative. Her exchange year in Japan and participation in the AFS Youth Assembly pushed her beyond her comfort zone, broadened her worldview, and instilled in her a deep commitment to giving back. Kiran continues to cherish the friendships and connections she built through AFS, maintaining close ties with her host facility in Japan through regular video calls. Her experiences taught her the enduring value of connection across borders and the power of cultural understanding. Through the AFS GAIN project, Kiran and her team conducted multiple sessions in remote public schools across Pakistan, sharing knowledge and fostering global citizenship among young learners. Grateful for the lifelong bonds and opportunities AFS has provided, Kiran embodies the spirit of intercultural exchange and the belief that meaningful connections can inspire lasting change.



NORTH AMERICA



Cygrett Estévez
Honduras

Cygrett Estévez, a Honduran educator and changemaker, co-founded Jaguars Bilingual School in Siguatepeque with her mother to provide children—regardless of economic background—access to quality bilingual education. With a multidisciplinary background in engineering, psychology, and law, she leads the school with both academic and human-centered insight. Since its beginnings in 2013, Jaguars has grown to serve over 300 students and 25–30 staff, earning trust through word-of-mouth and a strong scholarship program that transforms families' futures. Success stories, such as the Romero Medina family and scholarship recipients like Anthony Isai and Emanuel, highlight the school's impact. In 2025, Jaguars welcomed its first international exchange student, reinforcing its commitment to global citizenship. For Cygrett, the school is more than an institution; it is family, rooted in compassion and opportunity, and a testament to her belief that education is the most powerful tool for transformation.

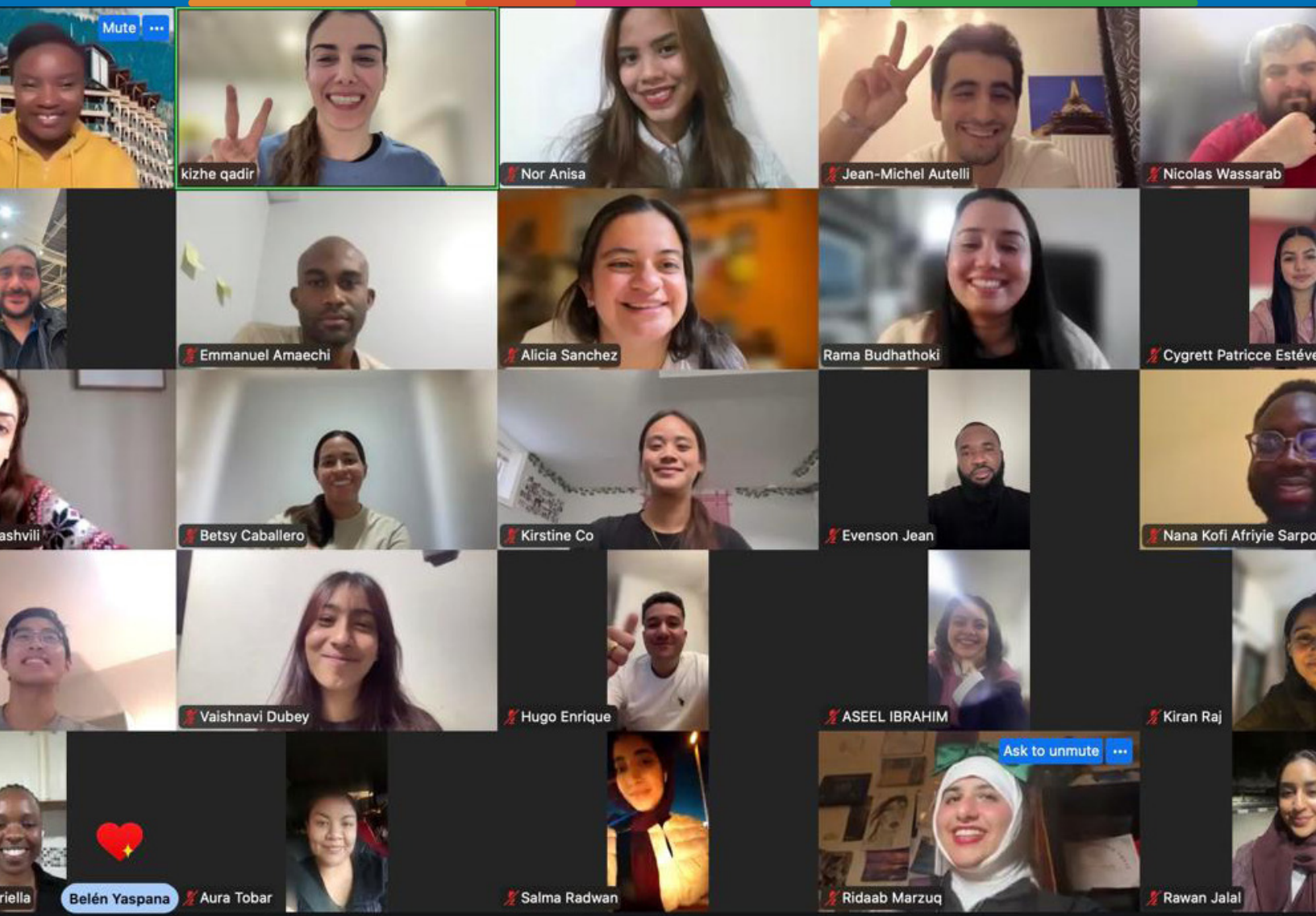


EUROPE



Sophie Fasshauer
Germany

Sophie Fasshauer is a passionate environmental advocate committed to tackling the urgent challenge of inefficient electronic waste recycling. Guided by a profound sense of responsibility toward the planet, she founded Cyanovation, a pioneering venture with the mission of "Recreating Recycling to Reuse (e-waste)". Through Cyanovation, Sophie champions the idea of stopping the waste by developing innovative, bacteria-based recycling processes that promote sustainability and circularity. Her work embodies a vision of transforming discarded electronics into renewed resources, ensuring a cleaner, more responsible future for generations to come.



Virtual Regional Meetups

Virtual Regional meetups functioned as the primary operational mechanism for capacity building and regional alignment during year-1. Transitioning from ad-hoc networking to structured engagement, the Asia and Oceania region utilized an inaugural virtual welcome session to re-establish alumni connections, while Europe conducted two targeted sessions specifically designed to diagnose alumni needs. The African region further leveraged this digital format to deliver technical value, launching a dedicated workshop focused on mentoring and fundraising strategies.

The LATCAR region’s meetup focused on connecting with alumni and setting the context for engagement. Furthermore, the North American region focused on exploring funding and capacity building opportunities. These digital engagements form part of the network’s strategic objectives, to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, connection and support cross-regional initiatives.



Cross-Regional Pilot: The Global Youth Responsibility Alliance (GYRA) Project

The Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania regions collaborated, conceptualized and successfully launched the GYRA Project (Global Youth Responsibility Alliance) in late 2025, marking the first cross-regional Impact Coordinator-led pilot initiative within the Network. This campaign addresses declarations made at the 30th Youth Assembly by emphasizing shared responsibility for climate justice, human rights, and the accountability of Global North corporate practices impacting Global South communities. This project serves as a crucial prototype for shifting power dynamics and fostering equitable cross-regional partnerships.

GYRA uses LinkedIn as its primary platform to share concise, accessible content aligned with each regional theme in the forms of thematic carousels, short videos, and focused visual statements. It also organizes youth-led virtual dialogue bringing together representatives from Africa, Europe, and Asia alongside invited experts to discuss accountability, climate justice, and youth inclusion.

Special Scholars Program:

The Sir Cyril Taylor Young African Leaders Program

The Sir Cyril Taylor Young African Leaders Program is a special 12-month initiative that supports 10 young African leaders, aged 18-35, with capacity building, seed funding and resources to further impact initiatives that promote sustainable development in their local communities. It is funded by the Cyril Taylor Charitable Foundation.

All of the participants completed the online Global Competence Certificate program, mastering intercultural competencies. This program moves the concept of global citizenship from an abstract ideal to a measurable skill set. They also had the opportunity to engage and network directly with global influencers at the 30th AFS Youth Assembly convening in New York, with two participants receiving the Outstanding Delegate Award and Ambassador designation. The leaders participated in the Effect+ community workshop during the Assembly where they built changemaking skills and a scalable training framework to replicate the workshop in their local communities. They are now taking those learnings and training to at least 100 more young people in their own respective communities in order to multiply their social impact. Below list how each leader is carrying out the Effect+ training in their respective regions.

A total of \$5000 USD in seed funding was also awarded to the Young Leaders to carry forward their own impact initiatives. Below is a brief highlight of the diverse range of initiatives these Young African Leaders are running to dismantle barriers to education, inclusion, and climate awareness.

Inclusion and Literacy

In Ghana, Prosper Achulo developed the first Braille-converted agricultural business curriculum, providing 150 blind students with the tools for economic independence. In South Africa, Karabo Ntjana has reached over 100 families, distributing 175+ books to strengthen guardian-child relationships and offer hope to orphans through literacy.

Education, Development, Research & Policy

In Kenya, Ruth Nanjala has trained 40 researchers to translate complex cancer research into accessible stories for policy influence. In Uganda, Julia Muhumuza is ensuring that more students gain access to quality education and leadership development opportunities. In Nigeria, Oluwadamilare Adisa has added four new partner schools to his initiative and introduced a multilingual, multimodal coursebook and take-home workbook which have benefited over 100 students so far.



Science communication workshop: Interactive training sessions on the principles of effective science communication | Ruth Nanjala



The Whizzbang Showcase: translating fundamental chemical principles into a series of engaging, memorable experiences, aiming to ignite curiosity and show that chemistry is a dynamic, creative, and essential science | Tshegofatso Molapo



The Climate Edutainment Project: demonstrating that creative art and game-based learning are powerful tools for engaging young people in climate education and advocacy | Aliyu Sadiq

STEM and Digital Innovation

In South Africa, Tshegofatso Molapo's chemistry showcase has piqued student interest, proving that chemistry is exciting rather than intimidating. In Ghana, Joshua Agyemang is equipping youth with future-proof skills in AI storytelling, robotics, and coding while integrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) components.

Grassroots Mobilization and Climate Action

In Nigeria, Aliyu Sadiq has sensitized 157 Nigeria teenagers through interactive climate games and creative advocacy pitching. Meanwhile, Odunayo Aliu has hosted workshops ranging from remote villages to urban centers in Lagos, focusing on helping educators find their "Why" and connecting them to professional opportunities via social media. Feyipitan Sadiku has trained over 200 students in essay writing to help them articulate their voices as global citizens.

Reinvestment is the culture of real leadership.



Delton Domah



Shradha Shrestha

Legacy:

Alumni Giving Back

To ensure that the AFS Youth Assembly remains accessible to the next generation of young leaders, some alumni have begun actively funding the participation of new leaders. Delton Domah (Liberia and USA) and Shradha Shrestha (Nepal & USA) have taken the initiative to sponsor conference costs for 20 delegates from underrepresented communities. This supports the network's goal of maintaining a truly global reach, particularly in regions where financial barriers might otherwise stifle promising talent. The act of "paying it forward" also instills a cultural norm of reinvestment within the network. When alumni like Domah and Shradha sponsor new delegates, they are not just providing a scholarship; they are modelling exemplary leadership behavior where the success of past participants directly fuels the opportunities of future ones.



Challenges

- There is **very high demand for structured guidance, expert mentors, and additional seed funding** especially for projects at the ideation stage. Africa, with the largest number of alumni, also has the highest funding and mentorship gaps. Young changemakers seek high-quality mentorship and topical expertise to refine visions and troubleshoot obstacles.
- There is a critical need for larger or more frequent seed funding pools and regional mini-grants to **enable Impact Coordinators** to organize local/regional networking events in order to assess youth needs and interests, promote collaboration and continued engagement with alumni.
- **Different regions have different needs, and localized approaches need to be implemented.** MENA alumni seek context-specific SDG resources. Meanwhile, varying English proficiency in the LATCAR region has given rise to language-inclusive content. All regions across the board have varying degrees of specific needs which need to be met in order for alumni to meaningfully be engaged in action and impact.



Learnings

- Immediate follow-up with alumni after each session of the AFS Youth Assembly is important.** The substantial effort invested in re-engaging alumni of previous Youth Assemblies shows that in the absence of proactive engagement strategies post conference, alumni energy quickly fades.
- The touchpoints matter, however small.** 1-on-1 check-ins, comments, and encouragement keep alumni engaged throughout the year.
- Regular updates, even short ones, build trust and continuity. **Consistency matters.** The Alumni Newsletter helps to close this gap and provides a continued loop of engagement.
- Support must be flexible, holistic, and responsive to alumni needs and contexts.**
- Inspiring alumni stories is how you keep the network motivated. Inter-regional collaboration across regions helps to build upon intercultural awareness and competence.**
- Insights from the 2025 Seed Fund Cycle**
 There is a significant gap between requested funds and disbursed amounts. While the Fund is an excellent catalyst for social impact, mature projects with large-scale infrastructure needs like building classrooms or national tours will require secondary funding rounds or external partnerships to take off. Also, the Fund has proven to be a vital instrument for Phase III (Leading Action) of the network strategy. This follows Phases I and II where Impact Coordinators set the foundation and assessed alumni needs. Currently, the fund is operating as a high-impact, low-overhead mechanism that empowers alumni to solve localized problems with global significance. This is ideal for ideation/early-stage initiatives but very likely to be ineffective for growth stage social enterprises and beyond.



Looking Forward

The initial phase of the Alumni Impact Network has successfully laid the groundwork for a scalable global movement. The next phase will focus on transforming localized achievements into institutionalized, sustainable models for alumni empowerment. In 2026, we hope to:

- Formalize support infrastructure, by developing regional toolkits, databases, and expert mentorship pathways to make support scalable.
- Scale innovation pipelines, by exploring and expanding diverse collaboration models.
- Amplify the network's visibility and voice, by ensuring the voices of young changemakers within the network are centered in global policy and development dialogues.
- Take stock of the action made towards commitments in the Declaration of Impact from 2025.
- Expand alumni engagement at the 31st AFS Youth Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.





Conclusion

The AFS Youth Assembly Alumni Impact Network is a proof of concept that creative strategies and intentional coordination can amplify decentralized, local actions into global systemic changes. By maturing this model of trust, personalized guidance, and seed funding, the network is fast evolving into a reliable, scalable pipeline for future leaders.



Appendix

Profile of Impact Coordinators

MENA



Kizhe Qadir - Iraq

Kizhe is an educator and UN Global Schools volunteer committed to youth empowerment. An AFS Youth Assembly alumna and former academic coordinator, she integrates STEM and leadership initiatives into her teaching to inspire students to tackle global challenges.

ASIA & OCEANIA



Mohammad Shadab - India

Mohammad is a record-breaking volunteer and founder of the “Girls, Say YES” project, which supports women’s empowerment. An AFS alumnus, he specializes in intercultural exchange, climate action, and community service, earning accolades for his extensive volunteer hours.



Vaishnavi Dubey - Japan

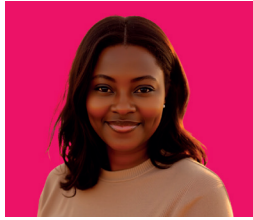
An undergraduate at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Vaishnavi is an active AFS volunteer and founder of the ‘RED DRIVE’, a movement to eradicate period poverty. She has held multiple leadership roles, including serving as a youth ambassador and delegate to Japan-led innovation forums.



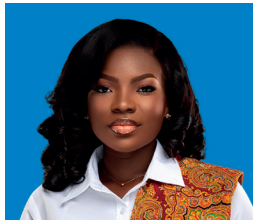
Anila Mahita - Australia

Anila is a Biomedicine graduate and Academic Programs Officer at the University of Melbourne. With a background in bioengineering and research at Reach Alliance, she is passionate about leveraging engineering principles to enhance healthcare quality and sustainability.

AFRICA

**Joyceline Kwarko - Ghana**

Joyceline is a digital marketer and climate activist dedicated to sustainable development. An AFS Climate Entrepreneurship Academy alumna, she champions beach cleanups, sustainable art, and STEM education for women while volunteering for Zero Hunger initiatives.

**Anita Bondzie - Ghana**

Anita is the Founder of SHE DARES 2 LEAD LBG, a non-profit empowering young women in leadership. A Supply Chain Analyst currently pursuing her Master's in Hungary, she focuses on advancing SDGs 5, 10, 16, and 17 through advocacy and strategy.

LATCAR

**Hugo Osorio - UK/Colombia**

Hugo is a UK-educated professional and founder of 'Sueña e Impacta', a project that has delivered 350+ workshops on social entrepreneurship. A former advisor to the Presidency of Colombia, he was recently awarded the Ambassador for Colombians Abroad medal for his advocacy for migrant communities.

NORTH AMERICA

**Rama Budhathoki - USA**

Rama is a data analyst and founder of Global Maheela, a social enterprise empowering women and orphaned youth. Through her "Train–Create–Sell–Heal–Empower" model, she bridges grassroots creativity with global markets to build financial and emotional resilience for families.

EUROPE

**Ayomide Ajagbe - Germany**

Ayomide is a Communications Specialist at the Africa Policy Research Institute and Director at CCIS. Awarded for her leadership by DAAD, she uses her expertise in media and language to drive sustainable development and empower youth through international forums like the World Bank Youth Summit.

The world needs more Active Global Citizens: **AFS helps create them.**



Contact youth.assembly@afs.org for more information.

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A special thanks to our impact coordinators for their contributions to the work of the network:
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Ayomide Ajagbe, Hugo Osorio, and Rama Budhathoki.



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