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**GENERATION Z EAGER FOR CULTURAL EXPLORATION, MINDFUL OF
SECURITY AND AFFORDABILITY, REPORT FINDS**

Comprehensive, global AFS Intercultural Programs research explores the motivations for and hindrances to high school international study among Generation Z

NEW YORK, N.Y. (February 09, 2017) – Cultural exploration is the primary motivator for Generation Z youth to study abroad, according to a new report published by AFS Intercultural Programs, a leader in international exchange mobility and intercultural learning.

The first-of-its-kind report, Mapping Generation Z: Attitudes toward International Education Programs, polled more than 5,000 teenagers (aged 13-18) in nearly 30 countries about their attitudes and perceptions on studying abroad, experiencing new ideas and immersing themselves in drastically different cultures than their own.

And the outcomes show that the idea of cultural exploration is an exciting one for Generation Z. Of the more than 5,000 teenagers aged 13-18 who responded, 60 percent indicated they have already considered an exchange. The majority of respondents (57 to 75 percent, depending on geographic region of origin) expressed that their primary motivator for considering international education was to seek new cultural experiences.

“This study clearly demonstrates that young people around the world are eager to embrace and experience different cultures and ideas,” said Daniel Obst, president of AFS Intercultural Programs. “Our world is stronger and more dynamic when people have the skills and competence to engage with one another.”

While the concept of cultural exploration is enticing to Generation Z, obstacles remain. According to the survey, concerns about safety and security have an impact on students’ decision to study abroad; in fact, the percentage of students citing concerns for safety and security increased by 16 percent throughout the survey’s data-collection period, which took place with the backdrop of a number of terrorist attacks in 2016. With 52 percent of students

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indicating they have concerns about safety and security, this supersedes other common perceived roadblocks to pursuing international study, including fear of isolation (50 percent), homesickness (48 percent) and discrimination (34 percent).

“The data sheds light on the acute awareness that Generation Z exhibits around the events affecting global security,” said Hristo Banov, the primary architect of the study. “As it is, the youth and student travel industry bolsters a variety of best practices to keep participants safe. It is of utmost importance that we continue to demonstrate strong understanding of risk management and safety along with an unwavering commitment to empowering global citizens ready to embrace the ideas of intercultural understanding and acceptance.”

Affordability remains a significant hurdle to international mobility and study abroad, especially as programs expand to more countries throughout the developing world. One-third of respondents (33 percent) in developing countries said that they would need scholarships and grants to pursue international education; in advanced economies, just about 15 percent reported similar needs. In addition, the report found that English-speaking countries such as the U.S., U.K. and Australia are the most sought-after destinations and earned the highest interest ratings (77 percent) for potential students seeking programs abroad, while emerging markets like Brazil and China fared significantly lower.

Other factors which influence a student’s decision to go abroad include reputation of the host country (77 percent) and reputation of the host school (64 percent).

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Mapping Generation Z: Attitudes toward International Education Programs:

This research was conducted by the Management Information Unit at AFS Intercultural Programs via a survey across 27 countries. The survey was translated into 16 languages. The collection period was March 2016 through December 2016. The 5,255 respondents ranged in age from 13-18 years.

About AFS Intercultural Programs:

AFS Intercultural Programs is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit education organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. Each year around 12,000 young people take part in the AFS Programs that are supported by over 42,000 volunteers and staff in 60 countries worldwide.