

# *Impact of Intercultural Learning on Youth in Hong Kong*



Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund –  
AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project

## Research Report

Funded by



The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

# Content

1	Executive Summary	p1
2	Background	p2
3	Research Objective	p4
4	Methodology	p4
5	Findings	p5
5.1	Students Background and Age Group	p5
5.2	Overall Impact on Behavior	p5
5.3	Overall Impact on Attitude	p6
5.4	Overall Impact on Condition	p6
5.5	Overall Impact on Knowledge	p7
5.6	Overall Success and Satisfaction on the Project	p7
6	Analysis Summary	p8
7	Discussion and Conclusion	p9
8	Recommendations	p10
8.1	Policy Level	p10
8.2	Community Level	p10
8.3	Personal Level	p10
9	About AFS Intercultural Exchanges	p11
10	Appreciation	p11
11	Appendix: Project Questionnaires	p11

# Executive Summary

Social needs and gaps in intercultural education have been identified. To address such needs and with the support from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, AFS Intercultural Exchanges (AFS HK) launched the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project (the Project) during the pandemic. The Project targeted youth aged 12-14 years. Within a 10-month period, the Project attracted more than 1,300 enrolments from over 450 schools.



AFS HK wished to find out the impact of intercultural learning on the students participating in the Project. AFS HK conducted surveys with the students before they started the Project and after they completed the Project.



\* Some photos were taken prior to the pandemic

Significant positive changes on the students in agreement with their “Behavior”, “Attitude”, “Condition” and “Knowledge” related to intercultural learning were achieved upon completion of the Project. The students had gained growth at both the personal and interpersonal levels, and got a lot of valuable learning about intercultural and global competence, such as intercultural communication skills, respect for other cultures and accepting cultural differences, which are essential in meeting challenges in the globalized world.

These findings provide initial evidence to support the introduction of intercultural learning in the secondary school curriculum; the inclusion of intercultural and competence skills training in the Other Learning Experience programs and activities at schools; the enhancement of the access to intercultural learning to parents, students and the community at large.

Global competence is a life-long and holistic learning process and the research findings recommend it to start at a young age. The Intercultural Learning Program should be continued and expanded to a larger group of audiences so as to improve the global competence of the new generation, addressing the “Social needs” and filling the “Service Gap” identified.

Addressing  
the  
Social Needs  
  
Filling  
the  
Service Gap

# Background

2

According to the Public Engagement Report published by the Commission on Youth (2018), young respondents opined that the current education system in Hong Kong did not encourage multi-faceted development, including skills and competencies, such as cultural appreciation, sense of responsibility and communal skills, etc. As developing intercultural competence and global citizenship are of paramount importance today, yet often been ignored in the Hong Kong’s school curriculums, indicating there is a “Service Gap” for intercultural learning.

The need for intercultural education is also justified by the challenges of today’s world combined with the lack of tolerance and understanding for the situation of an outgroup member, a human being who differs from most of the society, homogeneous in terms of its nationality, in his/ her origin, race and other traits. Emerging conflicts, indifference, intolerance, aggression, and rejection may be counteracted with education, culture, and acceptance of cultural pluralism. Thus, there is a “Social Needs” for intercultural learning in Hong Kong.

AFS is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization with a mission to provide intercultural learning opportunities for youths. AFS believed that, in times of practicing physical distancing, youth’s development of knowledge and social needs should not be put on hold. Hence, besides offering their annual Year Exchange Program and Summer Exchange Program across borders, AFS initiated the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project in 2020 with the support from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. It was believed that the Internet could serve as a safe and comfortable platform for the participants to communicate, connect, contribute, and create, thus filling the “Social Gap” and meeting the “Social Needs” identified.

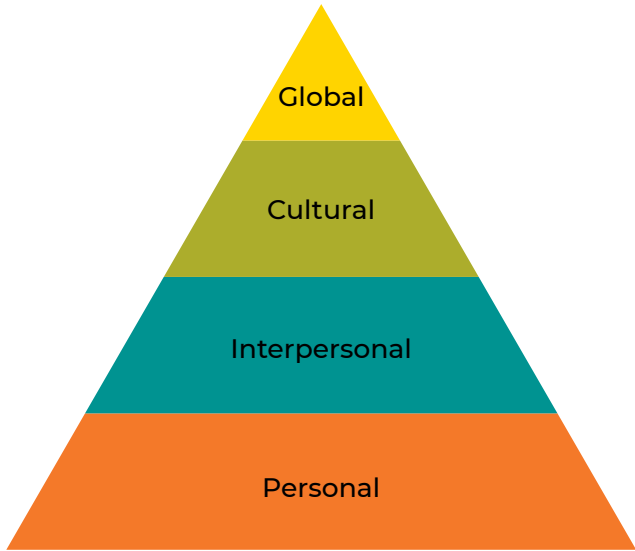
# About Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project

## Project Aim

The aim was to build global competence ability amongst the new generation. Specifically, the Project was intended to

- 1. Helping youth to be more inter-culturally aware and enhance their intercultural development
- 2. Helping youth to understand the reasons behind the different practices of people from all over the world
- 3. Helping youth to learn how to accept another’s identify
- 4. Helping youth to learn how to respect one’s individuality
- 5. Helping youth to inculcate values such as empathy, open mindedness, respect, and inclusivity

Based on the AFS’s Educational Objectives, the Project started from Personal, to Interpersonal, to Cultural, then finally to Global levels.



**Number of Workshop conducted**  
30 workshops of 15 hours each

 **30**  
workshops

 **15**  
hours per workshop



# Research Objective

3

To measure the impact of Intercultural Learning on youth in Hong Kong through measuring their changes in the following aspects before and after attending an online Intercultural Learning Program.



Behavior



Attitude



Condition



Knowledge

# Methodology

4

Participants were invited to fill in a questionnaire via Google before and after attending the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project (the Project) to measure their learning outcomes. The learning outcomes were measured by 5 indicators: Participants’ increase in agreement on their “Behavior”, “Attitude”, “Condition” and “Knowledge” related to cultural competence and their overall satisfaction with the Project.

Significant test at 95% level of confidence was conducted to measure if the changes were real changes.

Twelve (12) statements were asked about the intercultural competence of the participants prior to starting the Project. The same statements were asked to be rated upon completion of the Project. The survey was anonymous hence the impact of the Project was compared on a granular level instead of individual level.

# Findings

5

## 5.1 Students Background and Age Group

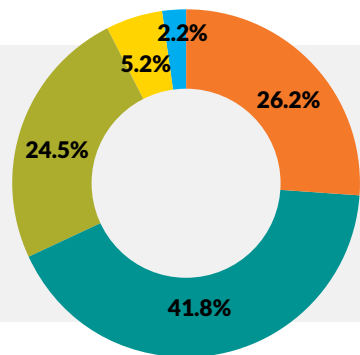
Students participated in the Project aged 12-14. They were from over 450 schools in Hong Kong. There were 404 students who responded to the survey out of the 667 survey questionnaires sent online. The response rate achieved was 60.6%.

## 5.2 Overall Impact on Behavior



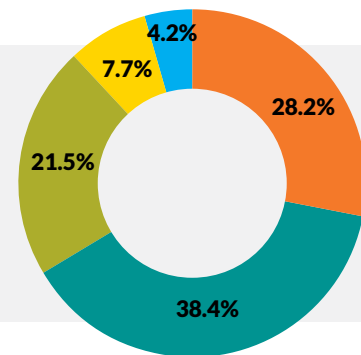
The Project had significantly increased the positive ratings of all the 3 statements measured regarding behavior. This indicated there was a real improvement on the students’ behavior in terms of intercultural matters.

Proactively take time to understand other cultures and world issues



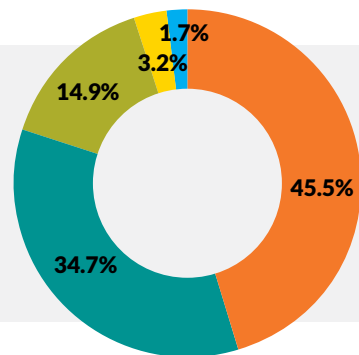
↑ 17.0%  
68.1%

Able to find ways to connect with people having a different culture and background



↑ 21.5%  
66.6%

Will take on culturally challenging situations for the reason of personal growth

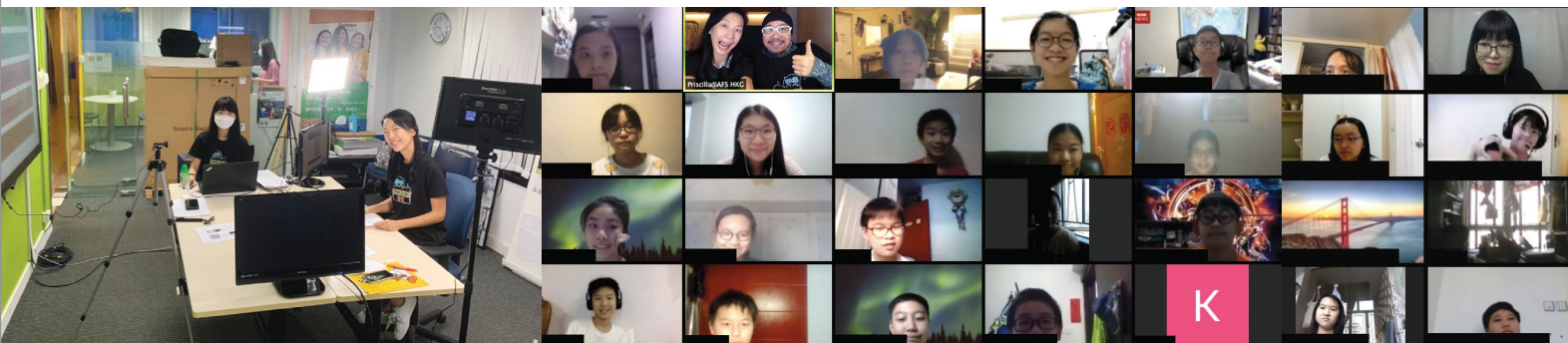


↑ 12.2%  
80.2%

Top 2 pies % (changes from pre project)

● Strongly agree ● 5 ● 4 ● 3 ● Disagree / Strongly disagree

Base: Pre project (N=625); Post project (N=404); Statistical significant at 95% level

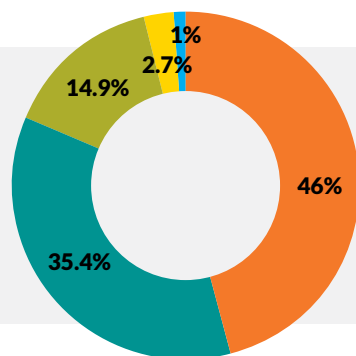


### 5.3 Overall Impact on Attitude



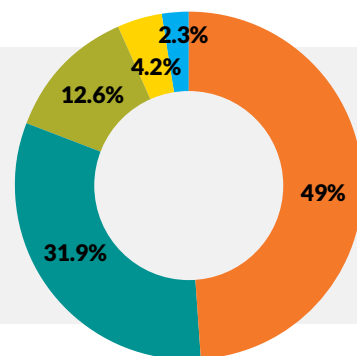
Significant increase of agreement on willingness to accept others' unique differences while enjoying similarities. Moderate increase was noted on being curious and sensitive when approaching a different culture and believe a deeper understanding of different cultures helps their personal growth.

Willing to accept each other's unique differences, while enjoy similarities



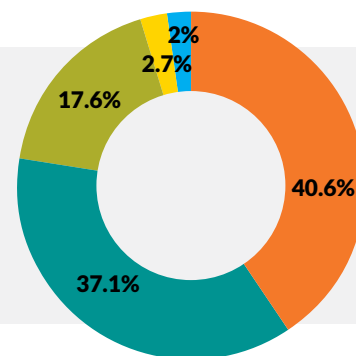
↑ **9.0%**  
81.4%

Curious and sensitive when approaching a different culture



↑ **5.1%**  
80.9%

Believe a deeper understanding of different cultures helps his/her personal growth



↑ **4.4%**  
77.7%

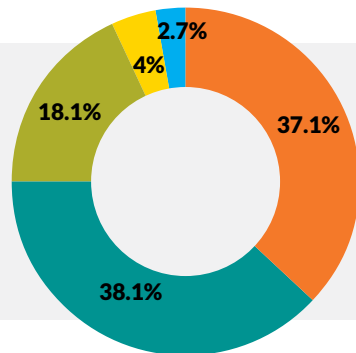
Top 2 pies % (changes from pre project)

### 5.4 Overall Impact on Condition



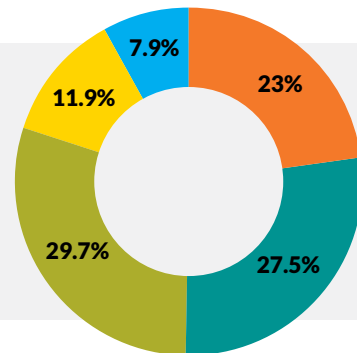
The Project had significantly increased the agreement of all the 3 statements measured regarding condition. This indicated the Project was impactful in raising the students' condition in terms of intercultural and global competence.

Have more interests in world affairs and issues commonly faced by all mankind



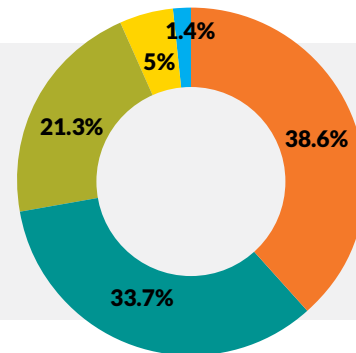
↑ **9.5%**  
75.2%

More aware of my ability to influence the world



↑ **12.9%**  
50.5%

Willing to contribute time and energy to build a better world for all humans and living things on earth



↑ **6.2%**  
72.3%

Top 2 pies % (changes from pre project)

● Strongly agree ● 5 ● 4 ● 3 ● Disagree / Strongly disagree

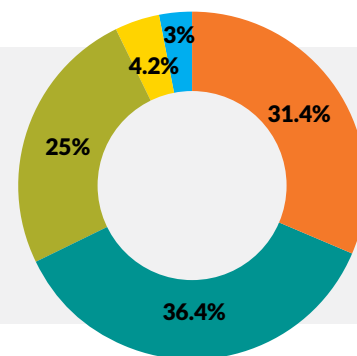
Base: Pre project (N=625); Post project (N=404); Statistical significant at 95% level

### 5.5 Overall Impact on Knowledge



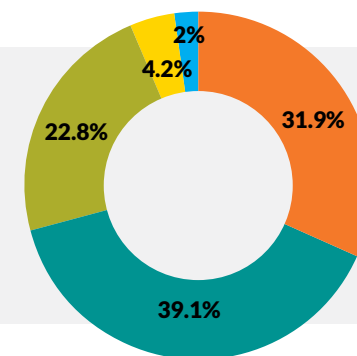
The Project had significantly increased the positive ratings of all the 3 statements measured regarding knowledge. A real improvement on the students' knowledge in terms of intercultural matters was achieved.

Know the basic definition of culture and apply simple measurements to describe one's culture



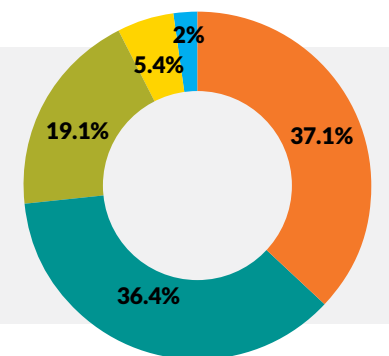
↑ **25.3%**  
67.8%

Can apply some culture-specific knowledge to improve cultural awareness



↑ **19.7%**  
71.0%

Can identify some non-verbal communication styles to gain understand of someone's culture



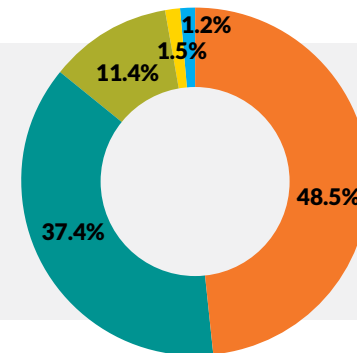
↑ **16.9%**  
73.5%

Top 2 pies % (changes from pre project)

### 5.6 Overall Success and Satisfaction on the Project

An increase of 4.4% to 25.3% agreement was attained for each of the statements measured, indicating the Project was very successful. Nearly half (48.5%) of the students indicated they 'strongly agree' that they were happy with their Overall Learning Experience. 85.9% of the students rated positive on their Overall Satisfaction, which meant close to 9 in 10 were happy about the Project.

Overall satisfaction



**85.9%**  
Top 2 pies %



\* Some photos were taken prior to the pandemic

Students were grateful that they learnt the differences in different cultures in various countries and knew how to communicate with different people. They also learnt to accept and respect others and others' cultural differences which were believed to be useful for their future development.

● Strongly agree ● 5 ● 4 ● 3 ● Disagree / Strongly disagree

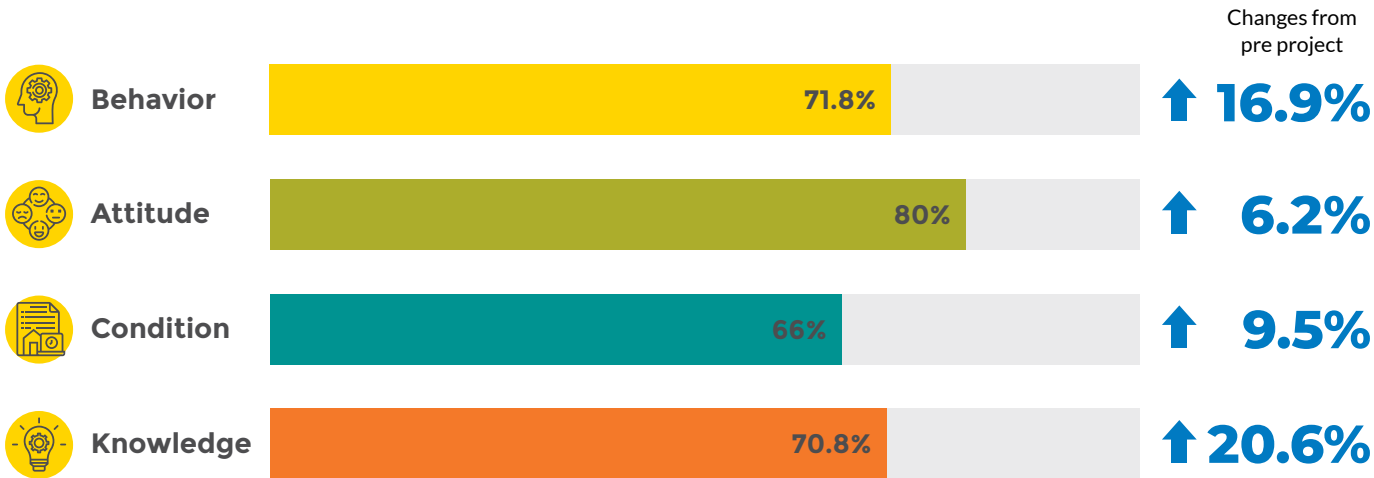
Base: Pre project (N=625); Post project (N=404); Statistical significant at 95% level



# Analysis Summary

6

Notable increase on the students in agreement with their “Behavior”, “Attitude”, “Condition” and “Knowledge” related to intercultural learning were achieved upon completion of the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project (the Project). The students had gained growth at both the personal and interpersonal levels, and got a lot of valuable learning about intercultural and global competences, such as intercultural communication skills, respect for other cultures and accepting cultural differences, which are essential in meeting challenges in the globalized world.



4 in 5 (80.0%) of the students agreed they were intercultural competent in terms of “Attitude” upon completion of the Project i.e. rated top 2 boxes on a 6-points scale, which was a slight improvement when compared with prior joining the Project. These students had high competence in “Attitude” prior joining the Project, which was why they took the initiative to participate.

The Project had achieved great success in terms of growing “Knowledge” about the students’ intercultural competence. 70.8% of the students agreed they were competent in this regard upon completion of the Project, a significant increment of 20.6%. The Project had provided substantial content for the students to grow personally and learn about culture, acceptance, and world issues.

71.6% of the students indicated they were intercultural competent in terms of “Behavior”, a significant improvement by 16.9% as compared with before they completed the Project.

66.0% of the students claimed they were intercultural competent in terms of “Condition”, again a significant improvement compared with prior joining the Project.

# Discussion and Conclusion

7

The improved positive views were statistically significant at 95% for “Behavior”, “Condition” and “Knowledge”, which implied there was real growth in their intercultural development.

Amongst these, improvement on “Knowledge” was the most prominent, the students benefited significantly in terms of understanding themselves, linking to others, understanding the differences in culture and knowing how to apply their learning.

Global competence is a life-long and holistic learning process and should start at a young age. The Intercultural Learning Program should be continued and expanded to a larger group of audiences which would improve the global competence for the new generation, addressing the “Social needs” and filling the “Service Gap”. The impact of the Program would be even more significant for audiences who were less “interculturally aware / concern” upfront.

The Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project (the Project) was a great success. It had achieved the number of targets anticipated: more than 1,300 enrolments from over 450 schools and the students were highly satisfied with the Project.

If the social distancing requirements are relaxed, the Project would better be conducted via a face-to-face group format which allows more interactions and connection. It is believed this type of project could be even more impactful if conducted face-to-face physically.

The survey was anonymous hence the impact of the Project mentioned above were compared on a granular level instead of individual level. For future measurement of the Project impact, perhaps some ‘technical logistics’ can be built in the survey to allow individual comparison before and after the Project.



\* Some photos were taken prior to the pandemic

# Recommendations

8

These findings provide initial evidence to support the introduction of intercultural learning in the secondary school curriculum; the inclusion of intercultural and competence skills training in the Other Learning Experience programs and activities at schools; the enhancement of the access to intercultural learning to parents, students and the community at large.



## 8.1 Policy Level

At the policy level, local education authorities are recommended to consider incorporating intercultural learning as part of the secondary school curriculum in the future. Global competence is important for a dynamic city like Hong Kong; the ability to accept and respect others are key elements in a harmonic society. This is a life-long and holistic learning process and should be started at a young age.



Based on the experience and mission, AFS will advocate the local education authorities to incorporate programs like The Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project into the school curriculum to promote intercultural and global competence of the new generation.

## 8.2 Community Level

At the Community level, schools are recommended to consider building global competence in the curriculum of their Other Learning Experience programs and activities. AFS will collaborate with local secondary schools in maximizing their students' access to intercultural education, as a learning journey to build up their global competence to meet the challenges in the globalized world.



## 8.3 Personal Level

At the personal level, parents and students should raise their awareness of intercultural and global competence. AFS will use an evidence-based approach to demonstrate that intercultural education can help the students to attain personal growth in terms of self-awareness, awareness about others and bridging to others.

\* Some photos were taken prior to the pandemic

# About AFS Intercultural Exchanges

9

AFS Intercultural Exchanges is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

AFS Hong Kong was established in 1982, it has established a track record of exchange programs for more than 4000 secondary school students in Hong Kong to over 25 countries and has hosted more than 800 foreign exchange students from these countries.

In recent years, AFS has been diversifying the sending destinations through increased collaboration with more AFS partner countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, and Japan.

The learning objectives of AFS exchange programs are to enhance the critical thinking, international awareness, and self-confidence of youth, hence the personal growth experienced by AFS students is significant. Upon their completion of an AFS program, students would demonstrate a greater appreciation of the diversity of the world as well as renewed pride and awareness of their home country and culture.

# Appreciation

AFS Intercultural Exchanges appreciated The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for their support in funding the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project.

# Appendix

Appendix contained the questionnaires of the Jockey Club Community Sustainability Fund – AFS Youth Intercultural Online Learning Project.

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# 「賽馬會社區持續抗逆基金 — AFS青少年跨文化網上學習計劃」

## 課程前期評估問卷調查

為瞭解同學對文化交流的認識，請您完成此份問卷 (數值越大，表示越同意)。  
你所提供的資料將供本機構作評估計劃成效及推廣跨文化學習課程之用。謝謝。

	Least					Most
1. 我會主動花時間去了解其他文化和世界議題。 I proactively take time to understand other cultures and world issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. 我會用不同渠道去認識和接觸不同國家和背景的人士。 I find ways to connect with people having a different culture and background from them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. 我願意為了個人成長而接受文化差異的挑戰。 I will take on culturally challenging situations for the reason of personal growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. 我願意在享受人與人之間相似之處時並接受其差異。 I am willing to accept each other's unique differences, while enjoy similarities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. 當我遇到不同的文化時，我會感到好奇。 I am curious and sensitive when approaching a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. 我相信對文化有深入的了解有助個人成長。 I believe a deeper understanding of different cultures helps your personal growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. 我對人類面對的問題和世界議題增加了興趣。 I have more interests in world affairs and issues commonly faced by all mankind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. 我意識到我對世界的影響能力。 I am aware of my ability to influence the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. 我願意花時間為人類和生物建造一個更加好地球。 I am willing to contribute time and energy to build a better world for all humans and living things on earth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. 我理解文化的基本定義。我可以應用一些指標去形容一個文化。 I know the basic definition of culture and apply simple measurements to describe one's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. 我能應用特定的文化知識去提高對其意識。 I can apply some culture-specific knowledge to improve cultural awareness.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. 我能透過一些非語言溝通方式去理解其他文化, 例如表情、姿態動作。 I can identify some non-verbal communication styles to gain understand of someone's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6

班別: \_\_\_\_\_

# 「賽馬會社區持續抗逆基金 — AFS青少年跨文化網上學習計劃」

## 課程後期評估問卷調查

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	Least					Most
1. 我會主動花時間去了解其他文化和世界議題。 I proactively take time to understand other cultures and world issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. 我會用不同渠道去認識和接觸不同國家和背景的人士。 I find ways to connect with people having a different culture and background from them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. 我願意為了個人成長而接受文化差異的挑戰。 I will take on culturally challenging situations for the reason of personal growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. 我願意在享受人與人之間相似之處時並接受其差異。 I am willing to accept each other's unique differences, while enjoy similarities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. 當我遇到不同的文化時，我會感到好奇。 I am curious and sensitive when approaching a different culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
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7. 我對人類面對的問題和世界議題增加了興趣。 I have more interests in world affairs and issues commonly faced by all mankind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. 我意識到我對世界的影響能力。 I am aware of my ability to influence the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. 我願意花時間為人類和生物建造一個更加好地球。 I am willing to contribute time and energy to build a better world for all humans and living things on earth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. 我理解文化的基本定義。我可以應用一些指標去形容一個文化。 I know the basic definition of culture and apply simple measurements to describe one's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. 我能應用特定的文化知識去提高對其意識。 I can apply some culture-specific knowledge to improve cultural awareness.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. 我能透過一些非語言溝通方式去理解其他文化, 例如表情、姿態動作。 I can identify some non-verbal communication styles to gain understand of someone's culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6

完成課程後，我覺得最大的收穫是: \_\_\_\_\_

班別: \_\_\_\_\_



## **AFS Intercultural Exchanges**

*is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, non-profit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.*



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