



Interculture
South Africa

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Welcome to AFS

June 2018

About AFS

The history of AFS

AFS was founded in 1915 as the "American Field Service Ambulance Corps" and later reactivated in World War



II. Having witnessed both the devastation and brutality of those wars, Stephen Galatti, the Director General of the American Field Service Ambulance Corps during World War II, challenged his comrades to focus their post-war efforts on peace building. By bringing high school students from countries formerly at war, to the United States to live with families, study in secondary schools and develop understanding for each other, the idea was that this could be one way prevent future wars.

Exchanges were a radical thought at that time – Stephen Galatti wanted to bring German high school students to U.S. communities that had lost young men fighting Hitler's forces. Yet in this tremendous risk was a compelling vision that eventually took root and grew, both in the United States and around the world.

Within a few years, returning AFS participants – eager to share the newfound insights from their AFS programme – began organizing volunteer committees in their own countries modelled after the AFS branches or chapters in the US. Soon they were able to reciprocate the hospitality they had received.

From 1947 until the early 1970s AFS exchanges were bilateral between the United States and as many as 80 other countries. As the number of AFS organisations grew around the world and as many of them grew in health and confidence, discussions began among them of the need to balance their inter-dependence with greater measures of independence. Between the 1970s and 1990s more and more national AFS organizations became 'Full Partners', allowing them to work more independently. This new structure now allowed more variety. From the 70s onwards it was now possible to go from US to France, from Brazil to Germany or and from Paraguay to Egypt.

MISSION STATEMENT

AFS is an international, voluntary, non-government, 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 enables people to act as responsible global citizens working for peace and understanding in a diverse world. It acknowledges that peace is a dynamic concept threatened by injustice, inequity and intolerance.

AFS seeks to affirm faith in the dignity and worth of every human being and of all nations and cultures. It encourages respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language, religion or social status.

AFS activities are based on our core values of dignity, respect for differences, harmony, sensitivity and tolerance.

AFS Today

From its American beginnings, AFS has become an international organisation with a network of partner organisations and affiliates in over 50 countries. Supported by a small professional staff in New York, an international Board sets the direction of the Network and regulates relations between Partners, who are both inter-dependent and independent. The Network as a whole and all of its Partners are dedicated to building a more just and peaceful world through the intercultural learning, which can occur through experiencing international exchange. More than 13,000 students, young adults and teachers participate in AFS exchange programmes each

year. AFS is an international organisation, made up of partner organisations in over 50 different countries on six continents. Each AFS Partner is responsible for AFS activities in its own country. However, there is a shared mission, educational objectives and programme standards, policies and procedures.

AFS in South Africa – past and present

AFS Interculture South Africa (AFS ISA) was founded in 1958. Thirty years after it was founded, it sent and hosted students successfully from all over the world. Because of the political situation, AFS left South Africa in 1989.

However, staff members and volunteers kept on working independently on a small basis through bilateral contacts with some international AFS Partners.

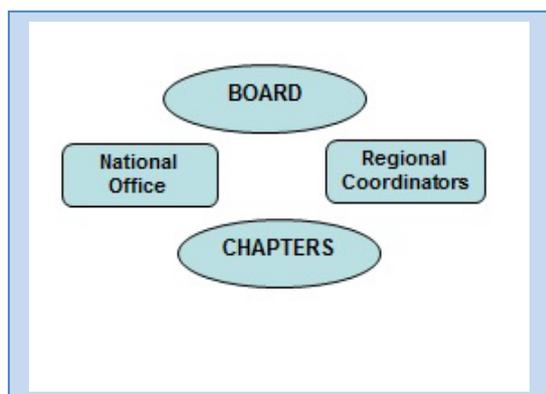
During the AFS World Congress in 1995, South Africa became an AFS Partner again: now able to handle a larger number of students.



Besides that, AFS ISA received great support from the AFS Network, to rebuild and expand the organisation. Today South Africa is one of the few AFS partners on the African continent.

The Structure of AFS Interculture South Africa (AFS ISA)

Most AFS Partners have broadly similar structures. The direction of most partners is set by a board of volunteers; the work in the field is done by volunteers who are usually organised in local groups, called chapters. In addition to that, there is a small team of professional staff members that support the work of the volunteers.



The **volunteers** in South Africa have formed **23 active chapters** (see an overview and contacts on page 8). By hosting and sending participants these chapters form the base of AFS Interculture South Africa.

AFS ISA is governed by a **Board of Directors**, which is elected by volunteers at the Annual General Assembly (AGA). The Board sets the mid- and long-term goals of the organisation. Thereafter holds the head of staff i.e. National Director, to account for staff performance and the organisation's progress against the goals set by the Board.

The **8 staff members** at the **National Office** support the work of the 23 chapters; through programme administration and co-ordination as well as monitoring the volunteers' chapter activities. The role of the staff includes but not limited to communicating with the AFS Partners all over the world.

Due to the geographical complexity of South Africa, a decision was made by the volunteers to demarcate the chapters into **Regions**. There are currently 8 regions, led by a **Regional Coordinator**. The Regional Coordinator (who is also a volunteer) is elected into duty by the volunteers in that particular region. Amongst the various roles of the regional coordinator, he/she is mainly responsible for providing support to the chapters in the region as well engaging the chapters with all AFS communication and activities.

AFS Programmes

Hosting High School Students

AFS ISA offers three different hosting programmes for high school students aged between 15 to 18 years that differ mainly from each other in length of the students' stay:

- The **Intensive Programme (IP)** lasts two months. Due to its short duration, the IP-Programme focuses more on experiencing South African cultures and fostering language skills than the long-term programmes.
- The **Semester Programme (SM)** lasts five or six months.
- **Year Programme (YP)** lasts ten to eleven months. Arrivals are in January and September.

Both the **(SM & YP)** programmes focus on getting into and living the every-day life of the host family and community.

Students hosted in all programmes are living in host families within the South African chapters. AFS - host families are not paid and host their students out of curiosity and interest in other cultures.

Orientations

Orientations are an important part of the AFS exchange experience.

They provide some structured support and engage the participants' intellectual abilities to help them understand their experiences in a larger context of intercultural education and global awareness.

AFS Orientations are organised and facilitated by our volunteers. They are a great opportunity to get to know our participants.

The AFS Offices provide support and guidelines.

Hosting Community Service Volunteers

South Africa is a highly desired destination with a lot of opportunities for volunteer work. Volunteers, who come from other countries, while offering their services, also integrate into the communities and get to know the different South African cultures. AFS hosts Community Service volunteers on programmes of three different lengths:

Trimester Programme (TR), three months

Semester Programme (SM), six months

Year Programme (YP), ten months

Community Service Volunteers are coming to South Africa from AFS Partners from all over the world. They work for different local organisations that address community service needs. Community Service Volunteers are either accommodated by the projects they volunteer in or by a host family, in other instances the volunteers might have a week-end-host family.

Hosting Orientations

Arrival: Takes place in Johannesburg right after the students arrive in SA.

Post-Arrival: Organised in the local chapters a few weeks after the arrival.

Mid-Stay: Organised in the local chapters at the middle of the stay.

Pre-Return: Organised in the local chapters a few weeks before leaving.

End of Stay: Takes place in Johannesburg just before departure.

Many of the volunteers that are hosted in South Africa are part of the German '**Weltwaerts**' Programme, which is sponsored by the German Government and lasts for eleven to twelve months.

Sending High School Students

AFS ISA also sends students to other countries. There are over 50 countries to choose from, students can either go on a year or a semester programme. Moreover, students may choose to participate in the shorter, intensive programme to France, Germany, Spain, Italy or Malaysia.

In addition, AFS ISA offers scholarships to help students participate in these programmes. One of them is the YES-Programme from the US government, which gives South African high school students an opportunity to go to the United States for twelve months. It especially targets Muslim students.

Sending Orientations

Pre-Departure: Mostly organised in the local chapters a few weeks before the participants leave SA.

Departure: Takes place in Johannesburg just before departure.

Post-Return: A few weeks after the participants returned to SA.

Sending Community Service Volunteers



AFS South Africa also provides the opportunity to go on a community service exchange. Community Service Participants volunteer with local organisations that address community service needs such as helping street children lead healthier lives or developing training programmes with human rights workers. During the programme, participants are exposed to new customs and values that challenge them to reflect their own cultural norms. This intercultural learning process develops in participants not only a deeper understanding of another culture, but, a richer awareness of their own background.

Volunteering with AFS

A Volunteer - Based Organisation

AFS is truly a volunteer-based organisation that has a strong commitment to more than 30,000 volunteers worldwide. To volunteer means to offer your time and skills without any remuneration. When you volunteer, you contribute your efforts to a larger cause. Free time is free and we are asking you to donate part of it to us.



Our volunteers perform vital roles within AFS. Some of the reasons to volunteer for AFS Interculture South Africa are:

- To meet a sense of social responsibility.
- To learn and gain professional skills.
- To make friends and socialize.
- For personal enjoyment and lots of fun!

We hope that our volunteers enjoy interaction with the various programme participants and also with each other!

AFS Chapters



The chapters are the engine room of AFS. It is from their chapters that volunteers, donating their time, their energies and their goodwill, do the lions' share of the organisation's work.

It is they who interact most immediately and directly with our students and community service volunteers, who look for host families and who support the participants as well as their new families during their participation in AFS programmes.

There are different jobs in the AFS chapters and a range of possible ways to involve yourself if you want to be part of

the AFS idea. To help you envisage the opportunities for you to be part of an organisation which builds understanding between peoples of the world, we will now have a look at the way in which chapters work, and the different roles which people play in that work.

Basic Roles within the chapter

The **Chapter Chairperson** coordinates the chapter's activities and provides leadership to the chapter. He / She makes sure that chapter meetings are held on a regular basis, keeps records and lists, and reports regularly to the Regional and National Offices including the volunteers from his / her chapter. The Chapter Chairperson delegates and monitors activities within the chapter and ensures that all responsibilities are met.

The **Treasurer** handles the finances of the chapter and reports to the chairperson. He / She may not be the same person as the chapter chair. The treasurer handles the chapter account and the reimbursement of the volunteers. The treasurer also sends monthly finance reports accompanied by receipts to the National Office and keeps accurate financial records and accounts.

In addition to that and depending on the size and focus of the chapter, there may be **more roles** that are assigned to chapter members, such as **Secretary** and **Fun Event Coordinator** as well as **Hosting, Sending and Support Coordinators**. Chapters have a flexible structure, which may be adjusted to the chapter needs. Tasks and responsibilities shall be delegated to different volunteers within the chapter.

Even if you think you don't have to time to take the responsibility of committing yourself to a formal position in your chapter, there are still a lot of ways in which you can build international understanding by helping AFS. You could do something as simple as organising a fun event with the participants, like a braai or a trip to a park.

Activities you can get involved in:

Student Support / Contact Person: One of the most important roles for volunteers is to support the foreign participants who are hosted in the chapter. This requires the ability to learn how to counsel, to be a friend and offer them opportunities to interact socially. It is a fun way to get to know people from around the world and to make new friends. It is also an opportunity to learn more about counselling and conflict resolution. Ask us how to become a contact person or organise social activities for AFS participants in your area.

Finding Host Families: Each year we host around 165 students and community service volunteers from overseas. You can help us find families for them. Do you know people who might be interested in hosting or do you have ideas how to find host families in your community?

Selection & Interviewing: All host families and all participants that go on an exchange need to be interviewed and / or selected by a volunteer before participating in a programme. You get to know the people your local chapter will be in charge of, and represent AFS.

Airport Assistance: The first impression is really important. That is why AFS Interculture South Africa is always looking for volunteers who are welcoming our international participants at the airport.

Orientations: AFS provides orientation events for host families, South African participants who go abroad, and for foreign participants hosted in South Africa. The orientations help them to cope with intercultural conflicts and to learn from their experiences. They are also events where people have fun together and get to know each other. You can help to organise and run these orientations. This is a chance to gain organisational and methodological knowledge, and to become a group leader.

Fun Events & Fundraising: Another way to get involved is to create fun activities to promote AFS, involving members of your community. This way you can raise scholarship money for sending deserving South Africans abroad or money supporting your local chapter.

Administration: The National Office in Johannesburg often needs help to photocopy, send out mails, make phone calls, type documents, create invitations or update our databases. You can learn what we do as staff and brush up your office skills.

School & CPO Relations: School relations are very important for AFS. You can help us further develop these relations. Give an AFS presentation at a school to find students who want to host or go on an exchange, and keep in touch with the school. Besides school relations, it is also very important for AFS to recruit and build up a relationship to our community service projects and organisations.

Volunteer Recruitment: It is really important for AFS as a volunteer-based organisation to maintain good relations to our volunteers, to tell people about AFS and its mission and to involve our programme returnees.

PR and Marketing: You can promote our programmes by organising school presentations, writing articles for local newspapers or getting one of our exchange students on radio. You can also become involved in internal communication: We have a quarterly volunteer newsletter.

AFS National Office

<u>Contact Details</u>	<u>Physical Address</u>	<u>Postal Address</u>
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Who is doing what?

Dennis Lane	National Director	dennis.lane@afs.org
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Utumiseng Rangaka	Hosting Coordinator	utumiseng.rangaka@afs.org
Nkosinathi Ngubeni	Office & Finance Assistant	Rsa.admin@afs.org

AFS Regional Coordinators

Region	Chapter	Regional Coordinator	Contact Details
Western Cape	<i>Cape Town North, Mosselbay, Tygerberg & Somerset West</i>	Status: Vacant	
KwaZulu Natal	Pietermaritzburg	Wendy Svendsen Status: Active	Email: wendy.svendsen@gmail.com
Inland South	Gauteng South, Observatory, Soweto & Eldorado Park	Thoko Ngubeni Status: Active	Email: thokongubeni62@gmail.com
Inland North – West	Johannesburg Northern Suburbs & Roodepoort.	Laurette Holme Status: Active	Email: laurette@cybersmart.co.za

<i>Inland East</i>	<i>Daveyton & Tembisa</i>	Laurette Holme <i>Status: Active</i>	Email: laurette@cybersmart.co.za
Inland North	Mamelodi, Akasia, Tshwane & Atteridgeville	Mmatepeng Temane <i>Status: Active</i>	Email: mmatepeng@gmail.com
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Free State	Bloemfontein	Malefu Mthethwa <i>Status: Active</i>	Email: mthethwamalefu@gmail.com

AFS Chapters

#	Chapter	Chapter Chair	<u>Email</u>
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4	Durban	Sipho Muthwa	siphomuthwa@gmail.com
5	Eldorado Park	Vernon Campher	campherv@telkomsa.net
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23	Weltevreden Park	Laurette Holme	laurette@cybersmart.co.za

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Who can be an AFS volunteer?

Anyone who wants to be! No background checks are conducted, but new volunteers could be asked to provide references if they are not known the chapter or office staff.

Do I get paid when I am volunteering with AFS?

AFS volunteers offer their time and skills without getting any money for it. They do it because they believe in the AFS mission and they simply enjoy volunteering for our organisation.

How much time do I need to give to AFS as a volunteer?

There is no set requirement for how much time you give AFS. Some volunteers choose to focus their work on a single activity within their community. AFS welcomes your support and respects your availability.

What if there is no active chapter in my area?

You can recruit other AFS volunteers and create a chapter in your area! Being an official chapter with AFS means that you have moral and financial support to run AFS Activities.

How to get involved with AFS?

If you want to become involved or if you just want to know more about AFS, contact our National Office (see page 8). They will provide further information and help you to get in contact with the local volunteers in your area.

I want to go abroad rather than volunteering with AFS in South Africa. What do I do?

For further information about our sending programmes (e.g. possible destinations and programme fees) please contact our National Office in Johannesburg (see page 8)!