

Minutes of the 61st General Assembly

- Date: Saturday, 14 April, 2018
- Time: 14.00 – 16.30h
- Place: F+F Schule für Gestaltung, Zürich
- Present: 61 Voting Members (including 8 Board Members) at the beginning of the GA and 63 Voting Members at the elections.
- 8 board members: Suzanne Weigelt (Chair), Idris Abdelkhalek, Lisa Drössler, Luc Estapé (ex officio), Emamdeen Fohim, Antonia König, Iris Reber (Vice Chair), Nicole von Reitzenstein,
- Excused: Shadrack Ashong and many members of AFS Switzerland
- Presiding: Suzanne Weigelt, Chair
- Minutes: Luc Estapé, Partner Director
- Vote Tellers: Nicolas Martig, Luca Palumbo

Suzanne Weigelt welcomes the attending members and guests and opens the 61st General Assembly of AFS Switzerland officially at 14.07 h. A special welcome goes to the honorary member present, Regula Stamm, and former National Director and current representative on the EFIL Board, Sabine Siegrist.

The invitation had been sent to members by email, including the Agenda and other background materials, complying with the statutory request of being available two weeks prior to the GA. The sending of background papers was done for the first time by email, and will continue in this manner in the future.

It is explained that for the voting by hand during the GA only the negative votes and abstentions will be counted and the number of positive votes will be concluded by deduction from the total votes.

Not all background materials that have been sent to the members will be presented to the General Assembly in detail.

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda of the GA 2018 is approved unanimously:

- | | |
|---|--|
| I. Approval of the Agenda | VII. Network Strategy |
| II. Determination of the Quorum & Election of Ballot Tellers, Keeper of Minutes | VIII. Strategic Priorities 2018 |
| III. Approval of the Minutes GA 2017 | IX. Budget 2018 |
| IV. Annual Report 2017 | X. Election of Board Members & Auditors |
| V. Financial Report 2017 & Report of the Auditors | XI. Volunteering |
| VI. Approval of Financial Report & Discharge of the Board | XII. Volunteer of the Year Award & Volunteer Appreciations |
| | XIII. Election Results |
| | XIV. Farewell |
| | XV. Volunteer Charter |
| | XVI. Varia |

2. Determination of the Quorum & Election of Ballot Tellers and Keeper of the Minutes

- Nicolas Martig and Luca Palumbo are proposed and unanimously elected as ballot tellers.
- Luc Estapé is unanimously elected to take the minutes.

The quorum according to the bylaws requires a minimum of 20 voting members (in addition to board members). With a presence of 64 voting members (including 8 board members) the required quorum is reached and the assembly can tend to business. The simple majority is at 50% + one vote, i.e. 33 votes for the elections.

3. Approval of the Minutes GA 2017

- The minutes of the GA 2017 in Vevey are approved with one abstention.

4. Annual Report 2017

The annual report 2017 was distributed to the participants beforehand. Suzanne Weigelt starts with some thoughts about strategic attitudes, before presenting challenges and board decisions regarding the board priorities of the past year, and finishes with a choice of AFS Switzerland's highlights of 2017:

The purpose of AFS is to fulfill its mission, to provide intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world. Youth exchange is a means to this end. We should reflect at least once a year what our purpose of being is.

Suzanne evaluates the Board Priorities for 2017 in a short summary:

a. Volunteers first!

2017 was our "Year of the Volunteers" and was designated to be a start into the re-design of volunteer roles, of handing back the lead to volunteers and in establishing a training concept and the volunteer life cycle management. In this sense, it was the opening to a renewed focus on volunteering in Switzerland.

b. Stability

The Board had spent considerable energy in further increasing financial transparency, better monitoring, and controlled investment management, leading to reducing the budgeted loss by CHF 61'000 although the budgeted participant numbers had not been reached.

c. Growth with Quality

Growth in participant numbers is one of the goals of AFS Switzerland, however, not by reducing quality. We have managed to stop the downturn in participant numbers, but not yet in the scale that we had hoped for; measures are showing effect, but we are confronted with competition from for-profit outfits. With AFS.Business, the exchange program for apprentices, not having scaled up yet; with sentio's main sales channel, the website, not being ready on time and the general political situation not favoring especially the USA as a destination, we are behind our plans for growth.

Quality also means that we do not want to compete with language travel: we are an exchange organization with a mission and want to focus on this mission, i.e. we want to have a diverse pool of destination countries and we definitely still want to be hosting as well, even if this a field where we still cannot cover our costs.

The main highlights from a Board perspective in 2017 were:

- Modernizing the website and all print materials
- ICL: customizing the intercultural learning kits to local realities and integrating them in all training plans
- Chapter Ticino: re-opening operations in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland
- The International Network Strategy, giving a new boost to all our activities
- having acted on the volunteers' wish to formulate a new vision statement for AFS SUI:
AFS is THE place for intercultural experience and expertise.

5. Financial Report & Report of the Auditors 2017

A copy of the financial report for 2017 was distributed with the annual report. Emi Fohim, member of the finance committee, presents the financial report 2017. He stresses the Board's wish to interact with members, also on financial matters: this is why we have a separate Budget Meeting prior to the GA; so that a more detailed discussion about finances can be had together with the National Director and Board Members. It is important for members to take an interest in the finances, as they are the legal owners of AFS.

In this sense, Emi stresses the task of the Board to control the budget expenses, which the GA had approved a year ago, counteracting on a continuous basis effects that change during the year. In 2017, we had budgeted for more participants than we could realize, so the cost base had to be adapted as well – leading to forced cuts in staff costs and marketing expenses. Overall this led to a loss of CHF 488'738, while the budget had foreseen a loss of CHF 549'500. The main reasons for the changes are explained in the documentation for the GA.

6. Approval of the Annual and the Financial Reports and Discharge of the Board

- ✓ The assembly unanimously accepts the annual report and approves both the financial report and the proposal to transfer the loss of CHF 448'738 to the general reserves.
- ✓ By also accepting the report of the auditors in an unanimous decision, discharge is given to the board.

7. Network Strategy

Suzanne Weigelt presents the Strategy paper that AFS International, under the lead of Daniel Obst, had finalized in 2017, which should be a guideline for the network development from 2018-2022. Suzanne repeats the offer that the full Network Strategy from AFS INT can be ordered at the office.

AFS INT has renewed the Mission Statement of AFS to:

We provide intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

A world where individuals and institutions are empowered to actively work towards advancing global understanding, transforming their communities and the world.

Suzanne summarizes the Strategy by explaining its main components:

a. Case for Change

While the exchange and language school market has grown in High School Abroad, in Volunteering Abroad, Language Travel and University Abroad, AFS has stalled since 2007, even showing reduced participant numbers.

b. Our Principles

Committing to Common Principles

- **One AFS**
- AFS is built on **volunteerism**
- We advance **active global citizenship**
- We **partner** with the people we serve
- **Collaboration with other organizations** is critical to help us achieve mission, scale and impact
- Just and peaceful societies are **diverse and inclusive**

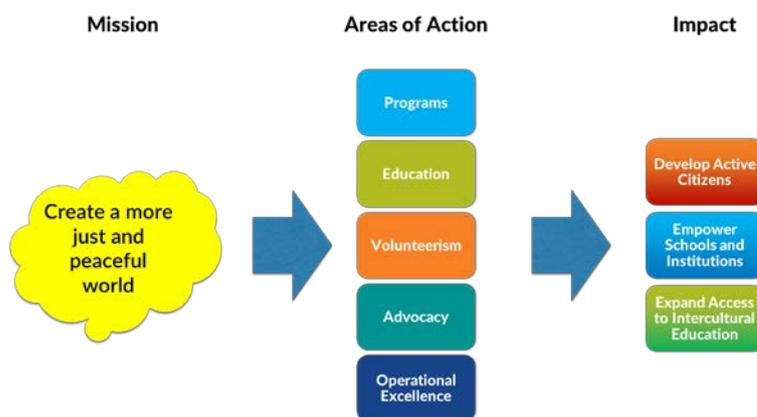
c. Potential

Seizing the Full Potential of Our Mission

1. Refocus on target audiences
2. Diversify program portfolio
3. **AFS DNA**: Ensure that all programs & activities are built on our **MISSION**
4. Cultivate & develop strategic partnerships with other organizations
5. Expand fundraising efforts
6. Improve the way we work together as **ONE AFS**.

d. From Mission to Impact

The Mission of AFS defines action areas that will have to prove their impact on the mission:



e. Co-Creation and Co-Funding

In order to have a maximum impact on the regional level, AFS partners are asked to contribute to the projects that are set in the action areas both with know-how (Co-Creation) and means (Co-Funding). AFS Switzerland is glad to participate in these efforts – for the time being and due to our own ongoing restructuring going on with financial means rather than manpower. We have committed USD 100'000 (7.1% of reserves as of the end of 2016), in five installments of 20'000 each, provided the financial situation of AFS Switzerland allows it. This is to be decided on an annual basis.

8. Strategic Priorities 2018

Nicole von Reitzenstein presents the main strategic focus areas for 2018 that the Board has decided on during their Strategy Retreat in November 2017.

a. Stability

AFS Switzerland will continue to focus on the organization's stability, both organizationally and financially.

b. Volunteering

The functional distribution of tasks between volunteers and staff (the German distinction between "Ehrenamtliche" and "Vollamtliche Mitarbeiter" is highlighted) is an ongoing process the Board is focusing on. The volunteering vision is clearly stated: AFS is conducted by volunteers, supported, where needed, by staff.

c. ICL

Intercultural Learning is the keystone of the AFS educational concept and has to be made transparently and understandably accessible to host families, volunteers and staff. Each one of us has to reach some specific level of the formal ICL education, in order to have an impact on the mission. With time, ICL should become our Unique Selling Proposition, distinguishing us from all of our competitors.

d. Growth with Quality

As our sending programs are still our main source of income, we have to make sure that the focus remains there. Especially our flagship programs for 15-18 year old school kids is crucial to our success.

9. Budget 2018

The detailed budget for 2018 was distributed with the GA documentation. Luc Estapé repeats the main points. He explains that while questions are welcome at any time, the special budget meeting just before the GA gives more space to detailed questions and explanations. He invites all interested members to join this group at the next GA.

AFS Switzerland is showing a budget with reduced participant numbers as compared to 2017. This is mainly due to two destinations, where we were confronted with a dramatic decline in participants: first the USA, where we are confronted with a 25% drop in demand. The U.S. still being our most important sending destination, this hits us overall with a 10% decrease in participants. The other destination is the UK, where we had to stop collaboration with the non-AFS network partner hosting our students due to a non-performance on the required support quality. We already have a good new partner, with whom AFS Germany has several years of good experience, but this will only be ready in the full scope in 2019. From this, we are expecting another 5 % less participants overall.

In total, therefore, we will only have about 196 sending participants on school programs in 2018.

As a consequence, we have to budget a loss of CHF 318'700. Adding this up with the losses incurred in 2016 and 2017, AFS Switzerland will have a cumulated loss over three years of 1.1 Mio CHF by the end of 2018. The GA has been informed that this is a consequence of our turnaround activities that increased staff costs, marketing and volunteering expenses in order to increase the number of participants in the medium run and to optimize processes, combined with unforeseen decreases in participants in some markets.

If, by the end of 2018 we do not see this turnaround to generate positive results for 2019, a restructuring plan for a reduced size of AFS will have to be worked out with effect in the first quarter of 2019.

As in the last GA there was a wish to elaborate on the new Business Units and their net contribution to the income, Luc also presents a table with these findings.

AFS Switzerland Net Contributions (Full Cost Base = incl. overhead allocation)	Final 2016	Final 2017	Budget 2018
	Pax	Pax	Pax
Net Sales Program	3'869'502 4%	3'772'109 4%	3'731'100 4%
Sending 15-18 Revenue + AFS.Business	2'989'822	2'925'440	2'562'000
Sending 15-18 Expenses	-1'817'045	-1'956'815	-1'580'000
Gross Contribution Sending 15-18	1'172'777 39%	968'625 33%	982'000 39%
Number of Staff	6.8	6.5	4.0
Number of Auxiliaries	1.0	1.0	2.0
Full Cost Staff and Auxiliaries (incl. overhead)	-1'017'918	-954'396	-674'740
Net Contribution Sending 15-18 + AFS.Business	154'866 5%	14'236 0%	307'266 8%
Net Contribution / Se Pax	717	64	1'568
sentio Revenue	184'301	164'611	448'200
sentio Expenses	-120'181	-134'793	-312'700
Gross Contribution sentio	64'120 35%	29'818 8%	135'500 30%
Number of Staff	0.7	0.7	0.5
Number of Auxiliaries	0.0	0.0	0.0
Full Cost Staff and Auxiliaries (incl. overhead)	-99'508	-96'344	-67'756
Net Contribution sentio	-35'388 -9%	-66'525 -40%	67'745 8%
Net Contribution / Pax	-1'041	-2'079	1'355
Hosting Highschool Revenue	718'178	680'758	720'900
Hosting Highschool Expenses	-343'642	-245'078	-332'700
Gross Contribution Hosting Highschool	372'536 52%	435'680 64%	388'200 54%
Number of Staff	6.3	5.5	4.3
Number of Auxiliaries	1.0	1.0	1.7
Full Cost Staff and Auxiliaries (incl. overhead)	-946'841	-816'761	-695'490
Net Contribution Hosting Highschool	-574'298 -80%	-381'075 -56%	-307'284 -43%
Net Contribution / Ho Pax	-3'545	-2'459	-1'707

✓ The General Assembly unanimously approves the budget for 2018.

10. Election of Board Members and Auditors

Idris Abdelkhalek gives an overview on the candidates for (re-)election to the Board and the election procedure. The election of the officers (Chair and Vice-Chair) takes place every year; board members are elected for a two-year term.

Iris Reber does not seek re-election.

The Board proposes a new candidate for her position: Carla Kaufmann.

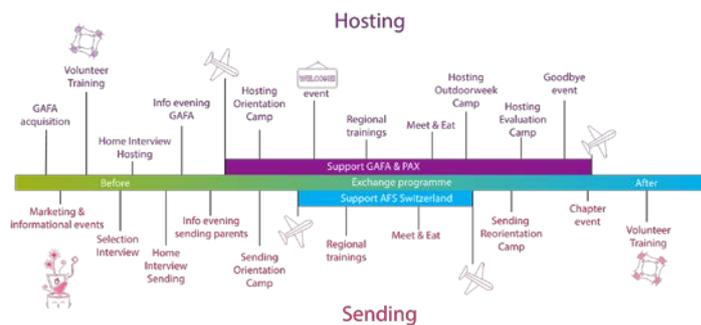
The candidates for (re-)election thus are Lisa Drössler, Nicole von Reitzenstein, Suzanne Weigelt and Carla Kaufmann. The auditors of OBT are seeking re-election as well.

Current Chair Suzanne Weigelt is standing together with Lisa Drössler as the Vice-Chair.

The members are asked to fill in the election cards. The ballots are collected and the result will be presented at agenda point 13.

11. Volunteer Activities

Lisa Drössler presents the AFS activities in the Year of the Volunteer 2017, starting with an overview of almost all functions AFS foresees for its volunteers. This is followed by mapping the volunteer roles in the context of sending and hosting:



In order to develop the volunteer base further and provide the best ground for success in each role, a new basis for volunteer training has been set up in the "Trainingskonzept AFS Schweiz". In 2017 we have already introduced many measures and tools, more will follow in 2018:

- ongoing
 - ✓ Standardized trainings modules, SUI-wide and decentralized
 - ✓ Improved quality of content
 - ✓ Pilot basic training for new volunteers in fall 2017
 - ✓ Pilot camp counselor training in spring 2018
 - ✓ Further improve SPoT (Swiss Pool of Trainers)
- next steps
 - Track individual progress (certificates)
 - Develop online training tools

Lisa repeats the offer to the members: if anybody wants to have a copy of the new training concept of AFS Switzerland, please contact the office – there will be documents in German, French and English in due time (for the moment: German).

This session is followed by a panel discussion moderated by Antonia König, interviewing three volunteers on their attraction to AFS and their being changed by the #AFSeffect: Noam Dessibourg, returnee in 2017, Caroline Schmid,

SPoT member and key volunteer, as well as Katya Marti, Chair of the Jura chapter are giving prove of their commitment to the mission of AFS. This was a very moving and empowering moment for the GA audience.

12. Volunteer of the Year Award & Volunteer Appreciations

Iris Reber first honors the Key Volunteers of AFS that are present at this General Assembly: Florian Bachofner, Elena Blumenbach, Cristina Canuto, Christiane Forstnig, Myrta Grubenmann, Katja Heitkämper, Sonja Loosli, Katya Marti, Lisa Marti, Elisabeth Messerli, Benjamin Schlegel, Caroline Schmid, Cléo Schwerzmann, Rilana Stadler.

Each year the Board presents the winners of the 'Volunteer of the Year' award: one volunteer each from the German- and French-speaking parts are selected by the volunteers; this year they were elected from a shortlist by volunteers, hosted participants and host parents. In previous years the nominations and elections had been done by the office team – given our re-focus on volunteers as the basis for our organization this procedure has been changed.

Volunteer of the Year 2017 for the Romandie is: Cristina Canuto

Volunteer of the Year 2017 for the German-speaking part of Switzerland is: Jette Tummer

The winners are offered a participation in EFIL's Volunteer Summer Summit in Norway in 2018.

13. Election Results

Idris presents the result of the election to the Board for the term 2018-2020 (in alphabetical order), of a total of 64 votes (simple majority 33):

- ✓ **Lisa Drössler (63 votes)**
- ✓ **Carla Kaufmann (63 votes)**
- ✓ **Nicole von Reitzenstein (63 votes)**
- ✓ **Suzanne Weigelt (62 votes)**

Elected as officers for 2018 are:

- ✓ **As Chairperson: Suzanne Weigelt (64 votes)**
- ✓ **As Vice Chair: Lisa Drössler (63 votes)**

Elected as auditors for 2018 is:

- ✓ **OBT AG (63 votes)**

14. Farewell

Antonia König summarizes Iris Reber's AFS career and the General Assembly bids her farewell after the appreciation of all her years of continuous engagement.

15. Volunteer Charter

Introduced by Idris Abdelkhalek, Cristina Canuto - the Romandie Volunteer of the year - presents the process and result of the 2018 Strategy Engagement Event held on 27 January, 2018. The outcome was the AFS Charter that is presented at this GA. The following values were identified as core to SUI Volunteers:

- Openness & Curiosity
- Learning & Engagement
- Comprehension & Friendships
- Passion & Volunteerism
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Empathy
- Solidarity
- Sustainability

16. Varia

The next GA will be held on Saturday, 6 April 2019.

Suzanne Weigelt officially closes the General Assembly at 16.30h.

Zurich, 1 May, 2018

Chairperson



Suzanne Weigelt

Recording Secretary



Luc Estapé