

2021

Annual Report



Connecting Lives, Sharing Cultures



“This has been a challenging year for the whole world and the AFS community is no different. Despite the challenges, it has also been a year of incredible accomplishments, one in which our young exchange students demonstrated tremendous solidarity and strength, our volunteers and staff did heroic work, and our alumni stepped up to join the frontlines of the fight against the pandemic.”

– DANIEL OBST, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF
AFS INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMS

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What we believe in

By linking our “learning to live together” philosophy to the defining global issues facing humanity, AFS fosters intercultural understanding as a powerful and productive tool for building a more just and peaceful world. The AFS global community embraces differences and believes our world is stronger and more interesting because of them.

AFS Mission

To engage Malaysians to embrace our differences and celebrate our commonalities through committed volunteerism for a united Malaysia.

FOREWORD

2021 demonstrated that together we can overcome our challenges despite the setbacks caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic. Throughout the AFS Network, we saw incredible collaboration with, and assistance from, partners who were in better positions and not as severely impacted as others. This commitment to service demonstrated by AFS volunteers and staff as well as the resilience of our students and host families have been truly impressive and humbling.

Since our borders remained close in 2021, we were unable to host any participants in Malaysia. Sending Programs were also reduced to only the Kakehashi and YES Programs which sustained our operations for the year. We also received Infrastructural Support funds for the 18+ Program which helped in our efforts to survive the effects of the global pandemic.

Digital Programs continued to be our main activity for the year. AFS Malaysia was selected as one of the partners to roll out an Effect + for Classroom initiative which saw 49 teachers participating in a 6-month long project.

AFS as a network formulated a Network Recovery Plan which has 3 Goals:

- Programs: Rebuild and Strengthen our Programs
- Operations: Build a more sustainable and flexible Network
- Purpose: Strengthen our Social Impact and Global Competence Development

Even with all the challenges that continue to face us, we have made great progress and are aligned with the network recovery plan. Our commitment to educate more young people by providing them with transformational intercultural experiences to build bridges across cultures remain steadfast.

AFS is a PEOPLE Organisation and losing people whether they are staff or volunteers is always difficult. Pre-pandemic, we had a total of 14 staff in the national office but by the end of 2022, the numbers were down to nine. Due to the uncertainties of the business caused by the pandemic including closed borders and sporadic lockdowns, some staff had left for better prospects and greater job security. However, the saying in AFS that one can check out at any time but one can never leave still holds true, for all of them have pledged to continue to volunteer with AFS as and when their services are needed.

We are still a long way from full recovery, but with continued support and collaboration from the Board, staff and volunteers, we are ready to build back better and jumpstart our programs again in 2022. Our sincere gratitude to all AFS alumni, volunteers, and staff whose work champions AFS values and makes the programs and activities featured in this Annual Report possible.



Khalilah Talha

CHAIRPERSON



Atty Sulaiman

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: SENDING

Flagship Programs

The number of students we sent on our Flagship programs continued to dwindle for 2021 as many countries are still unable to host or only offer limited number of students. Many students who have applied for their desired destination withdrew their applications when they were not able to be matched with their preferred country.

In total, we have sent two (2) students on a Year Program to Switzerland and Finland respectively. Three (3) students went to Italy on different program lengths, Intensive and Trimester.



Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES) Program

35 students were initially selected for the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study Semester Program to the United States for the 2021 cohort. This program is fully funded by the U.S. Department of State, and it provides scholarship for secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to a year in the United States. These participants serve as “youth ambassadors” of Malaysia, in promoting mutual understanding by forming lasting relationships with their host families and communities. Unfortunately, in this cohort, 33 students were not able to get clearance to depart to the United States of America, therefore, only two (2) students were able to go on the program as originally planned.



ASIA Kakehashi Project

This year, 31 students were awarded the Asia Kakehashi Project scholarship after going through a rigorous interview & selection process. The students departed for Japan in September 2021 as originally planned and completed their program in March 2022.

Asia Kakehashi Project is a fully funded program granted by MEXT (Japan Ministry of Education & Technology), an initiative meant to build bridges between high school students in Japan and Asia. Students from 20 selected Asian countries get the opportunity to study in Japan for 6-10 months, being hosted by a Japanese high school with homestay or dorm-stay to obtain exposure and experience to Japanese education, culture and way of life. Some 40,000 Japanese high school students and 1,000 Asian high school students will be impacted by the project in developing global competence of Japanese high school students through intercultural experiences without going abroad.



Sending Number Breakdown

The breakdown of the sending programs participant numbers for year 2021 can be found below:

PROGRAM	DURATION	HOST COUNTRY	NO. OF PARTICIPANT
Intensive Program	2 months	Italy	1
Peace Program	3 months	Italy	1
Trimester Program	3 months	Italy	1
Semester Program	6 months	Spain	1
Year Program	10 months	Switzerland	1
		Finland	1
Asia Kakehashi Project	6 months	Japan	31
YES Program	6 months	USA	2
Total No. of Participants			39

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: HOSTING

As borders remained closed throughout the year, we were still unable to run our physical hosting programs. This has affected the enthusiasm of our volunteers, host families and their communities, who have been looking forward to welcoming students to their homes.

However, we are happy that despite the challenges, we were able to virtually host four (4) participants from the United States of America participants under the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study Program.

Although a virtual experience pales by comparison to an actual physical exchange, nonetheless we tried our best to replicate all the major components of the program in order to give these participants a better insight into Malaysia and its culture. The participants were assigned to a host family, met them over the festive period, went through intensive language class, had cooking lessons, and went on cultural excursions and many more!

Here are some of the activities:

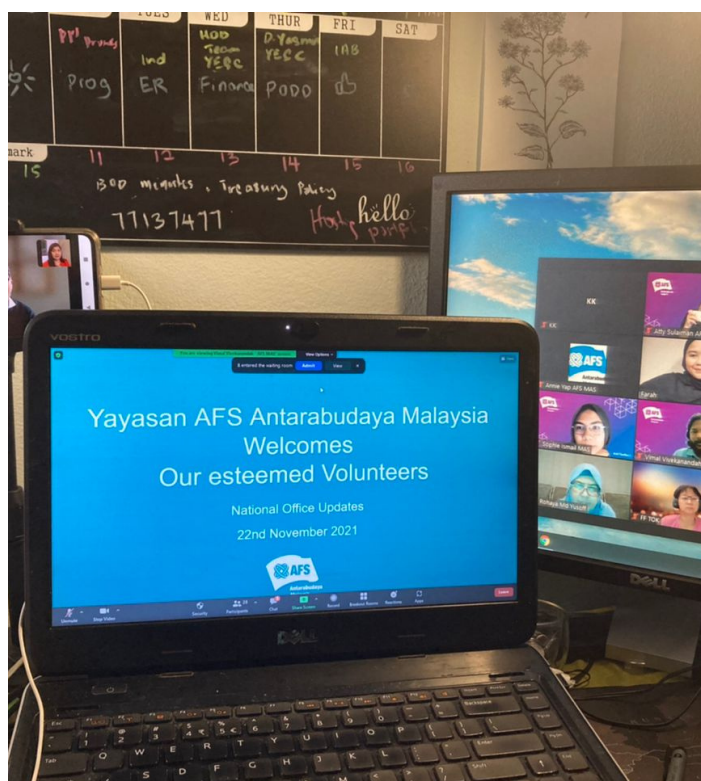
- 1. Cooking Class** - Students participated in a live session on how to make a Malaysian sweet / savoury dessert. A cooking instructor walked through the process while speaking in simple Bahasa Malaysia. It helped students to practice their vocabulary.
- 2. Dance Workshop** - A dance instructor (also a YES alumni in Malaysia) conducted this workshop. Students learned the significance of the dance and the instructor also provided a recorded tutorial video for the students to practice on their own.
- 3. Arts & Crafts** - Students had the opportunity to learn how to make Malaysian traditional arts and crafts such as Kolam making, Weaving, Batu Seremban, Wayang Kulit
- 4. Cultural Presentations** - Students presented about what they had gathered and learned throughout the virtual programme period.
- 5. CNY Host Family meet and greet**
- 6. Virtual Kuala Lumpur & Chow Kit tour**
- 7. Eid al-Fitri HF exchange**

CHAPTER & VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Covid-19 pandemic truly changed the living landscape of humanity. It was not expected to last through to 2021 but it did. Needless to say, it continued to cause havoc to the AFS Program operations. When cases shot beyond 20,000, with 3 lockdowns and international borders remaining closed, all volunteering duties came to a halt. Our chapters, mostly hosting driven, suddenly found themselves empty handed with no arrival of exchange students. To stay connected with our chapters and to circumvent losing the interest and enthusiasm of our volunteers, the National Office organized a number of virtual meetings throughout the year.

Virtual Events/Meetings for Volunteers

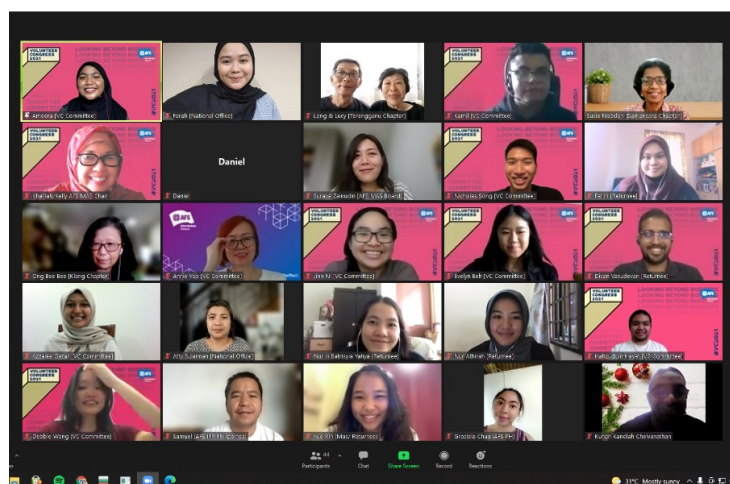
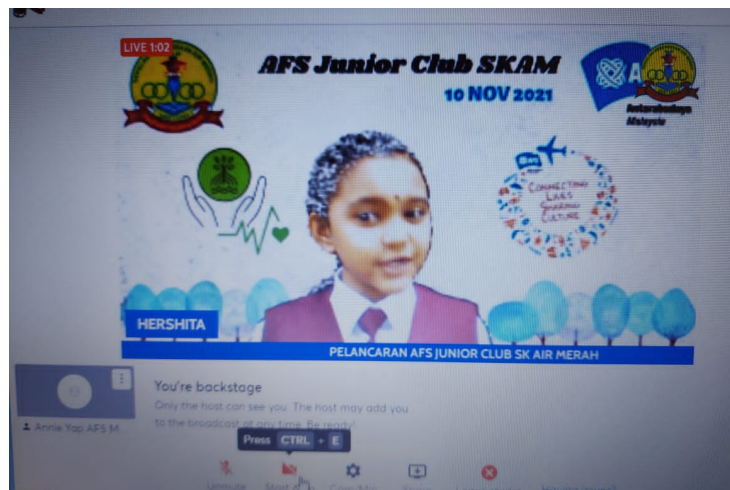
- Global Meeting – Boosting AFS Orientations in May
- Global Ideathon in September
- Meeting with Chapters – “AFS Post Pandemic, Moving Forward” in November
- Launching of AFS Junior Club at Sek. Keb. Air Merah (SKAM), Kulim in November
- Volunteer Global Meetup - International Volunteers Day in December
- Volunteer Congress 2021 in December
- Outstanding Volunteer Awards in December
- AAI Outstanding Award 2020/2021 in December



The launch of the SKAM Junior Club was a first to be done virtually. Credit must be given to the school for its committed efforts in organizing singing and dancing performances. A local District Education Officer graced the event. Another Junior Club at S.K. Sek. 13 conducted several cultural classroom exchanges with AFS schools which included those from India, Serbia, Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, Russia and a few more.

Volunteer Congress 2021 was the main highlight of the year for our volunteers. It was a challenge to organize a virtual event of that size. After many months of meet-ups and planning of the program itinerary, we saw an attendance of more than 120 pax at the event which included volunteers from the AAI (AFS Asia Initiatives) Partners. We received compliments on its execution with regard to the programme content, quality of speakers, innovative games and time management. A Scavenger Hunt rounded up the weekend. We owe its success to the capability, creativity and commitment of the VC committee consisting of our young returnees.

It was also a proud and memorable year for 2 of our volunteers who were recognized regionally for their exceptional work. Rohaya Md. Yusoff was named "Outstanding Volunteer 2020" and Ong Bee Bee the coveted award of "Outstanding Volunteer 2021". This only proves that while the pandemic kept one indoors, both of them rose to the occasion and came up with creative ways to make volunteering still relevant and possible. As the adage goes: You can't keep a good volunteer down!



Congratulations



Congratulations



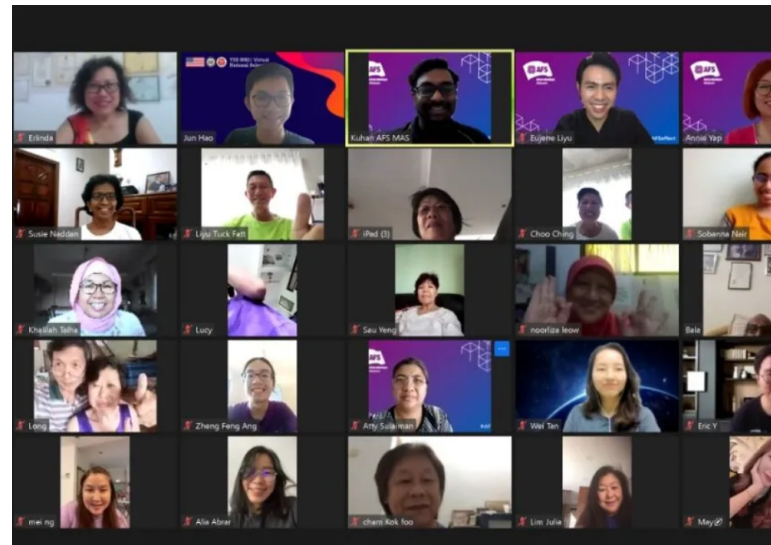
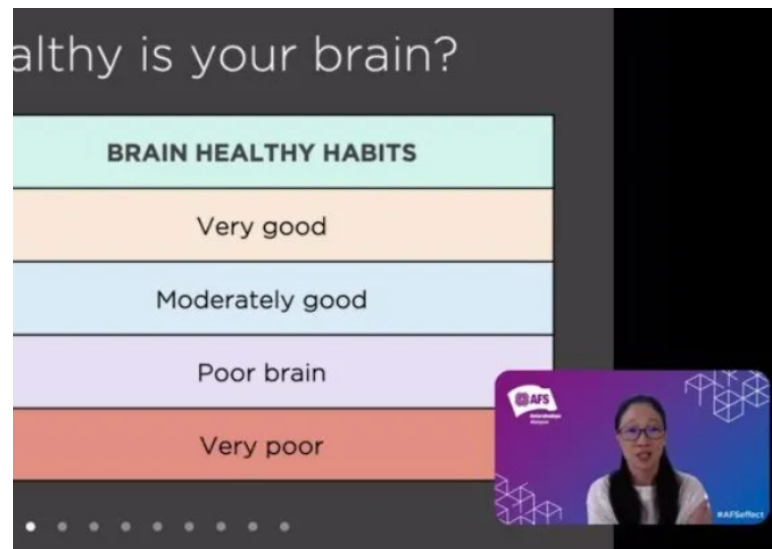
TRAINING, LEARNING & EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Following the success achieved during the first year of the pandemic, the Training, Learning & Education (TLE) department continued its efforts to embrace the new norm of virtual learning and increase the range of offerings to our stakeholders.

Volunteer Sharing Series (VSS)

This year, we embarked on a volunteer engagement initiative to keep the momentum going for our stakeholders as new variants of Covid-19 continued to keep the country on sporadic lockdowns. We had a total of five virtual Volunteer Sharing Series (VSS), where we had experts in the field sharing their knowledge and experience with our stakeholders. Among them were topics on Creative Activism by Amalen Sathananthar representing The Artist Network, Roshinee Mookaiah from Undi18 and Suraya Zainudin from RinggitOhRinggit. All the VSS sessions had very encouraging response thanks to the esteemed reputation of the speakers.

During the year 2021, we continued with our virtual workshops, training programmes and orientation programmes. Our staff, trainers and facilitators were continuously learning and developing new ways of conducting sessions through virtual platforms. Although it lacked the in-person feel, the virtual platforms certainly contributed to our cash flow output as we did not have to spend as much on transport, lodging and food for our trainees.



Global Facilitation Programme

The AFS network initiatives include investing in digital programmes for participants interested to participate in in-person intercultural exchanges but face challenges due to the pandemic. This includes the Student Learning Journey (SLJ) as a preparation for the students' impending exchange abroad. The SLJ contents were designed to cater to the students' competency and preparation before their in-person exchange. Other programmes include Global You Adventurer (GYA) and Global You Changemaker (GYC). These programmes are both conducted virtually and run for a total of 5 and 12 weeks respectively, where qualified global facilitators facilitate the participants' learning and progress weekly or bi-weekly. AFS Malaysia facilitators were selected amongst the network to manage and facilitate global cohorts, adding value to their knowledge, skills and experiences as Global Facilitators.

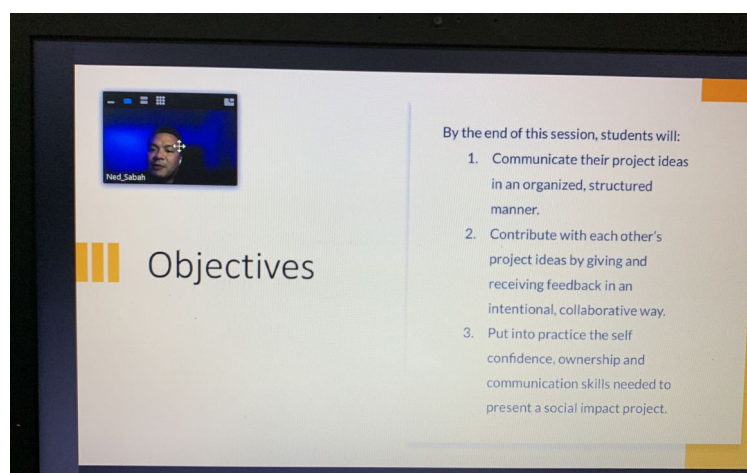
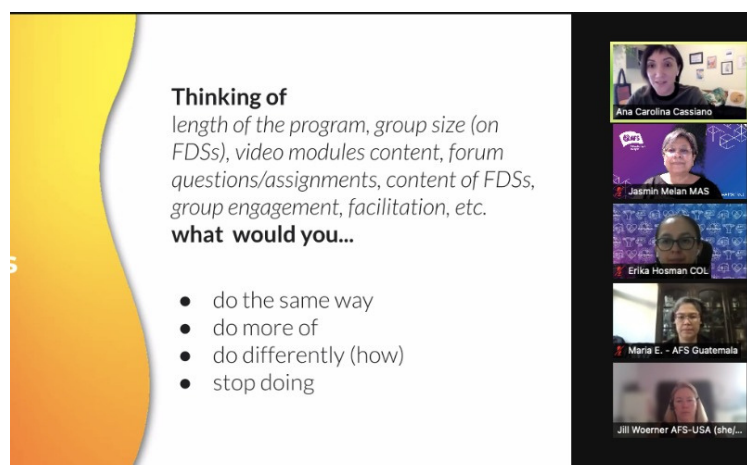
Global Competence Certificate (GCC)

Our Global Competence Certificate (GCC) programme was selected by AFS International and the Sir Cyril Taylor Foundation to be a recipient of the GCC-Effect+ Programme Scholarship for 50 Malaysian educators. These 50 educators were among 300 selected worldwide. The programme consisted of three phases, where Phase 1 was an online learning programme supported by a weekly Facilitated Dialogue Session (FDS) with teachers from 15 countries. Phase 1 lasted six weeks and all our Malaysian educators performed extremely well in the learning programme. Phase 2 was classroom implementation supported by Lesson Plans provided by our team of content developers from the AFS network. Phase 3 was a competition for students of these educators. They were required to submit a proposal for a sustainable development initiative based on the United Nations' SDG 2030 Goals. All these were made possible with the collaboration and cooperation of the Teachers' Professionalism Department (Bahagian Professionalisme Guru - BPG) at the Ministry of Education Malaysia, who selected the teachers under their purview and gave full support to the entire programme.

The direction of the network is geared towards Global Competences and we are seeking more co-operation and collaborations with potential partners to develop global competencies for our stakeholders; especially frontliners in education, namely our educators, trainers and facilitators.

Intercultural Learning (ICL)

As our core learning programme focus, the ICL programmes have been further developed this year to reach out to more educators and school students. For this year, we explored ICL for schools and ICL for educators virtually. We conducted various ICL infused workshops for primary and lower secondary students to introduce ICL elements and to eventually interest them in AFS programmes when they are in higher secondary. We have had some encouraging conversations and discussions with school heads and teachers alike about potentially having these workshops for their teaching faculty and students to prepare them for intercultural insights. Our key schools include SK Seksyen 13, Shah Alam, SJK Sin Ming, Puchong, SK Air Merah, Kulim and Chung Ling Private High School, Georgetown.



LEADERSHIP

AFS MALAYSIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

Khalilah Dato' Mohd Talha (chairperson)

Elangeshwaran Muthusamy

Sylvia Chan

Azreen Md Nasir

Datuk Yasmin Yusuff

Thiruchelvam Subramaniam

AFS MALAYSIA NATIONAL OFFICE 2021

Atty Sulaiman

National Director

Annie Yap

*Assistant National Director/ Chapter &
Volunteer Development Manager/HR*

Jasmin Melan

18+ and Fundraising Manager

Kuhan Kandiah Chelvanathan

Training, Learning & Education Manager

Nani Taha (Until May 2021)

Program Manager

Farah Niza Zulkifli

Finance Manager

Chyna Elvina Chin (Until June 2021)

Programs Executive – YES Program

Nadia Samsuddin

Programs Executive (Sending Programs)

Nurhasliza Sahadi

Digital Marketing & Creative Design Executive

Siti Sophie Ismail

Program Development

Zainal Izuddin Saharudin (Until March 2021)

Program Executive Hosting – School Based

CHAPTER

Nuriah Manap

Ampang Chapter

Zainuddin Hamzah

Bangi Chapter

Santhi M Raju

Damansara Chapter

Charlie Teo

Johor Chapter

Colin Poobalan

Klang Chapter

Rohaya Md Yusoff

Kedah Chapter

Anisah Abdul Halim

Kelantan Chapter

Jenny Kho

Melaka Chapter

Joycelyn Choong Miao Chen

Negeri Sembilan Chapter

Dr. Hari Ram Ramayya

Perlis Chapter

Datuk Martini Osman

Pahang Chapter

Datin Teo Hwee Ai

Penang Chapter

Lucus Asirvatham

Perak Chapter

Tok Fen Fen

Sabah Chapter

Bahtiar Afandi

Sarawak Chapter

Long Tin Piau

Terengganu Chapter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Embassies

Embassy of Italy

Embassy of Japan

Embassy of Spain

Embassy of Switzerland

Embassy of the United States of America

MINISTRIES/ GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE)

- *School Management Division*
- *Special School Education Division*
- *Curriculum Development Centre*
- *Cluster/Fully Residential School*
- *Management Division*
- *Co-curricular Unit*
- *State Education Department (JPN)*
 - i) School Division*
 - ii) Curriculum Unit*
 - iii) Relations and Registration Unit*
 - iv) Academic Unit*

Ministry of Tourism Malaysia

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia (MOFA)

Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture Malaysia

Immigration Department of Malaysia

Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia (LHDN)

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan (MEXT)

Schools

SK Seksyen 13, Shah Alam

SJK Sin Ming, Puchong

SK Air Merah, Kulim

Chung Ling Private High School, Georgetown.



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