

ANNUAL **REPORT**

2024

Connecting Lives. Sharing Cultures.

AFS MALAYSIA

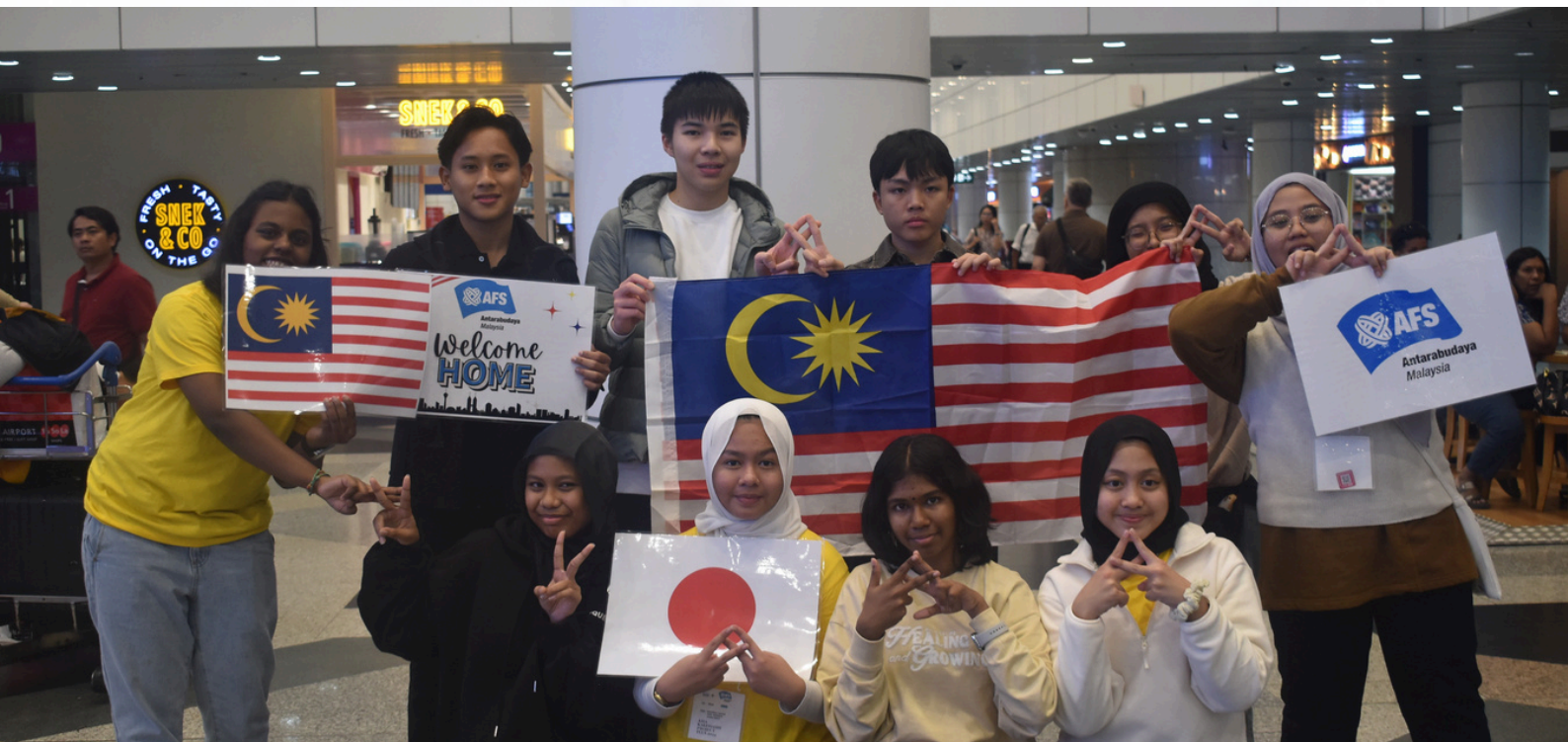
MISSION

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

AFS

MISSION STATEMENT

AFS Intercultural Programmes 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.



Asia Kakehashi Project Plus Participants Upon Returning home from Japan (Dec 2024)

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FOREWORD (CHAIRMAN)

Dear Valued Members,

As we reflect on 2024, I am proud to share the transformative strides Yayasan AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia has made in advancing our mission to foster global citizenship and inclusive education. This year marked a period of strategic governance, innovative partnerships and unwavering commitment to empowering underserved communities. Below are the key highlights of our collective achievements:

1. Strengthening Governance & Accountability

At the Board level, we prioritized robust governance frameworks to ensure effective leadership. We introduced a Board Induction Programme for new directors, equipping them with the tools to align with AFS's vision and operational ethos. Complementing this, we formalized a Code of Conduct of Conduct and Ethics to reinforce integrity across all tiers of decision making. Additionally, a structured Performance Review mechanism was implemented, fostering accountability and continuous improvement in our stewardship.

2. Advancing Equity Through Education

In line with our pledge to inclusivity, we set a clear policy directive to prioritize participation from the B40 community in our exchange programmes. Through targeted scholarships such as YES (Youth Exchange Study) and Kakehashi, we dismantled financial barriers for talented students, enabling them to access life-changing intercultural experiences. This year, we expanded this commitment by securing three fully funded scholarships for B40 students to participate in the prestigious IP Turkiye paid programme, further democratizing global opportunities.

3. Pioneering the School Partnership Model

A landmark achievement in 2024 was the launch of our School Partnership Initiatives, empowering educational institutions to take full ownership of programme participants. This collaborative model not only deepened engagement with local schools but also ensured sustainability and scalability of our programmes, creating a ripple effect of global awareness within communities.


4. Strategic Alignment within AFS International

Guided by the 4 Priorities framework set under AFS International's 2024/28 strategy, the Board provided rigorous oversight to the National Office, ensuring alignment with global priorities while addressing local needs. This synergy has strengthened our capacity to deliver impactful, culturally immersive programmes that resonate with Malaysia's diverse societal fabric.

Looking ahead, these accomplishments underscore our resolve to bridge gaps in global education while upholding the highest standards of governance. As we move into 2025, we remain focused on scaling our scholarship initiatives, deepening school partnerships and fostering a culture of ethical leadership at all levels.

To our Board members, National Director, staff, chapters, partners and supporters - thank you for your dedication to shaping a world where education transcends boundaries. Together, we are not just changing lives; we are building a future defined by empathy, equity and excellence.

With gratitude,



Abdul Halim Othman
Chairman, AFS Malaysia

What We Mean by Active Global Citizens

VALUE & BELONG
to a common and
diverse world

TAKE ACTION
toward collective
wellbeing



INQUIRE CRITICALLY
about the world
beyond immediate
environments

UNDERSTAND & RELATE
to others across
differences

FOREWORD (NATIONAL DIRECTOR)

As we reflect on a truly remarkable year, 2024 has been a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of intercultural exchange—a journey marked by significant achievements, profound learning experiences and the unwavering dedication of our entire AFS family, even amidst the challenges of a slow-moving global economy.

In a world that often feels increasingly fragmented, the mission of AFS to foster global competence through intercultural learning has never been more critical. We believe that by immersing individuals in diverse cultures, we're not just broadening their horizons, but also cultivating empathy, understanding and a shared sense of humanity. These are the foundational elements for building a more peaceful and just world.

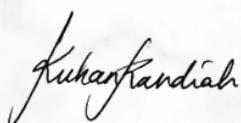
This year, we were particularly proud to witness an increased collaboration with our main stakeholder, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. This vital partnership allowed us to engage more deeply with high schools across the nation, benefiting both educators and students alike. A significant milestone was the Intercultural Workshop we conducted for various divisions and state education departments, enabling both parties to foster positive steps forward together. We also launched a new scholarship for our lower-income community (B40), the "Philip & Mark Friendship Award," which made an intensive programme to Türkiye possible through the generous collaboration of two friends to create impact. This year also marks the 66th anniversary of AFS Malaysia, a remarkable journey made possible by the continuous commitment of all our stakeholders over the years.

Our success is not ours alone. It's a collective effort, powered by the leadership of the board, tireless commitment of our dedicated staff; the generosity of our host families who open their homes and hearts; the passion of our volunteers who are the backbone of our operations; and the adventurous spirit of our students who embrace the challenge and joy of living in a new culture. To each of you, I extend my deepest appreciation. Your belief in our mission and your active participation are what bring the AFS experience to life.

Looking ahead, AFS is resolute in expanding our reach and deepening our impact. Our dedication is underscored by a clear network strategy, designed to cultivate active global citizens through the four essential priorities, which will guide the long-term direction of AFS. We're committed to continuously innovating our programmes, strengthening our cherished partnerships and exploring new avenues to provide unparalleled transformative intercultural experiences. By empowering more young people to embrace their roles as global citizens, we are investing profoundly in a future where diversity is a source of strength and bridges of understanding replace all forms of division.

Thank you for being an integral part of the AFS journey. Together, we can continue to propel our organization forward, ensuring we always uphold our core values, deeply held belief systems and the fundamental respect we have for one another.

With gratitude,



Kuhan Kandiah Chelvanathan
National Director

Our New Strategy

Impact

DEVELOP ACTIVE GLOBAL CITIZENS

Strategic
priorities

**Expand
Scholarships
and
Fundraising**

**Enhance our
Profile as an
Educational
Organization**

**Create the Best
Volunteer
Experience**

**Deliver
Excellence and
impact in our
Programmes**

Enablers

Technology + Data + Standard Network Processes

PRIORITY #1

Expand Scholarships and Fundraising

Objective 1

Make the AFS experience more accessible and inclusive by offering scholarships

Objective 2

Raise funds to diversify sources of income and be able to provide scholarships

Objective 3

Invest in Alumni Development

PRIORITY #2

Enhance our Profile as an Educational Organization

Objective 1

Strengthen internal capacity to enhance our educational impact

Objective 2

Broaden our high school network and strengthen our educator and high school relations

Objective 3

Position AFS as a leading educational organization

PRIORITY #3

Create the Best Volunteer Experience

Objective 1

Strengthen our identity as a volunteer organization

Objective 2

Provide a robust framework of development and support for volunteers along their volunteer journey

Objective 3

Expand opportunities for volunteers to develop active global citizens by involving them in the full range of AFS programme offers and activities

PRIORITY #4

Deliver Excellence and Impact in our Programmes

Objective 1

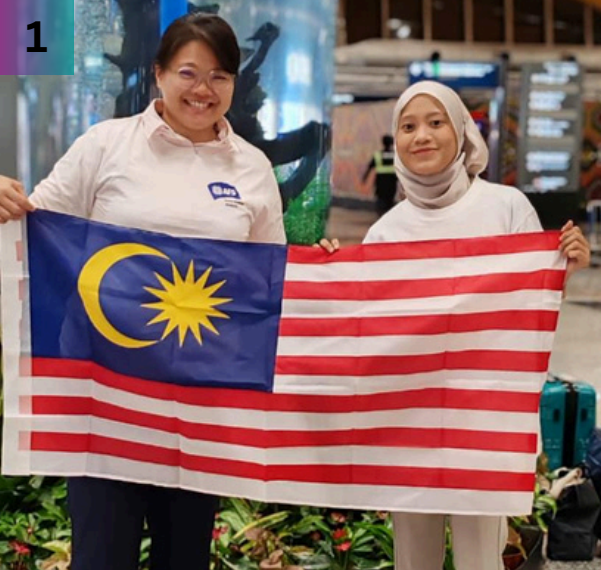
Energize Hosting

Objective 2

Achieve Excellence in Programme Delivery

Objective 3

Expand Capacity and Reach



1. Faza Auni Hamizah Abd Hamid (BP-Global STEM 2025) before departing to China with her chaperone.
2. High-school students at SMK Victoria, Kuala Lumpur during the YABM roadshow and information day.
3. The Kuantan Chapter successfully organized a collaborative beach clean-up and walk at Pelindung Beach, (also known as Turtle Beach) in partnership with the Lions Club of Kuantan City.
4. The Perak Chapter organized a vibrant gathering that combined a chapter meeting, Iftar and Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration.
5. Participants from the SH24 cohort (Japan) participating in activities during their Mid-Stay orientation.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In 2024, AFS Malaysia continued to uphold its strong commitment to promoting global citizenship, fostering cross-cultural understanding and facilitating meaningful educational exchange through its international student mobility programmes. A total of 62 Malaysian students participated in outbound exchange programmes, while 19 international students were hosted in Malaysia.

Although these figures reflect a slight decrease compared to 2023 (63 outbound and 21 inbound), they represent stable and sustained engagement. Notably, 2024 saw an increase in the diversity of both programme types and participating countries, highlighting growing global confidence in Malaysia as both a sending and hosting partner.

As part of its strategic goals, AFS Malaysia has renewed its efforts to energize its hosting programme and position itself as a leading educational organisation in the region. This includes expanding outreach, building new partnerships and showcasing the value of intercultural learning for Malaysian communities. The encouraging upward trend in international collaboration reflects not only a recovery from the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic but also AFS Malaysia's proactive role in strengthening Malaysia's presence in the global exchange landscape.



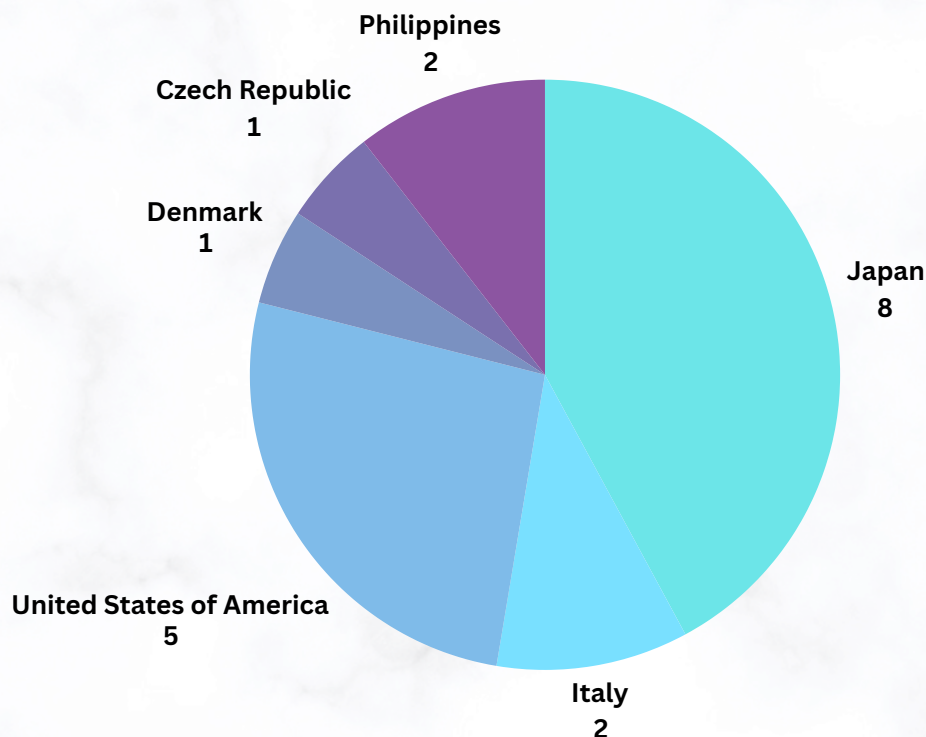
Our Intensive Programme participants departing to Turkiye in December 2024

HOSTING (INBOUND) PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In 2024, Malaysia hosted 19 international students, marking a slight decrease from 21 students in 2023. Despite the modest decline, the numbers continue to reflect strong international collaboration and Malaysia's sustained appeal as a welcoming host country for intercultural exchange.

Among the inbound participants were 14 AFS participants from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Japan and Philippines and alongside 5 students on the YES Abroad Programme from the United States of America. The YES Abroad Programme is a prestigious, fully funded initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that allows American students to study abroad. The hosted participants fully embraced Malaysia's rich diversity, immersing themselves in local customs while also sharing their own unique native cultures with the community.

The following presents a detailed breakdown of participants for the (inbound) hosting programme in 2024:



SENDING (OUTBOUND) PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In 2024, a total of 62 Malaysian students participated in international exchange programmes across 11 countries, encompassing both traditional academic exchanges and targeted short-term immersion initiatives. These programmes were strategically designed to promote holistic development, intercultural understanding and global competence, equipping students with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

Key highlights include participation in several prestigious and fully sponsored programmes, such as:

- BP Global STEM Programme
- Asia Kakehashi Project Plus (by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan)
- Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) Programme (by the Department of State, United States of America)

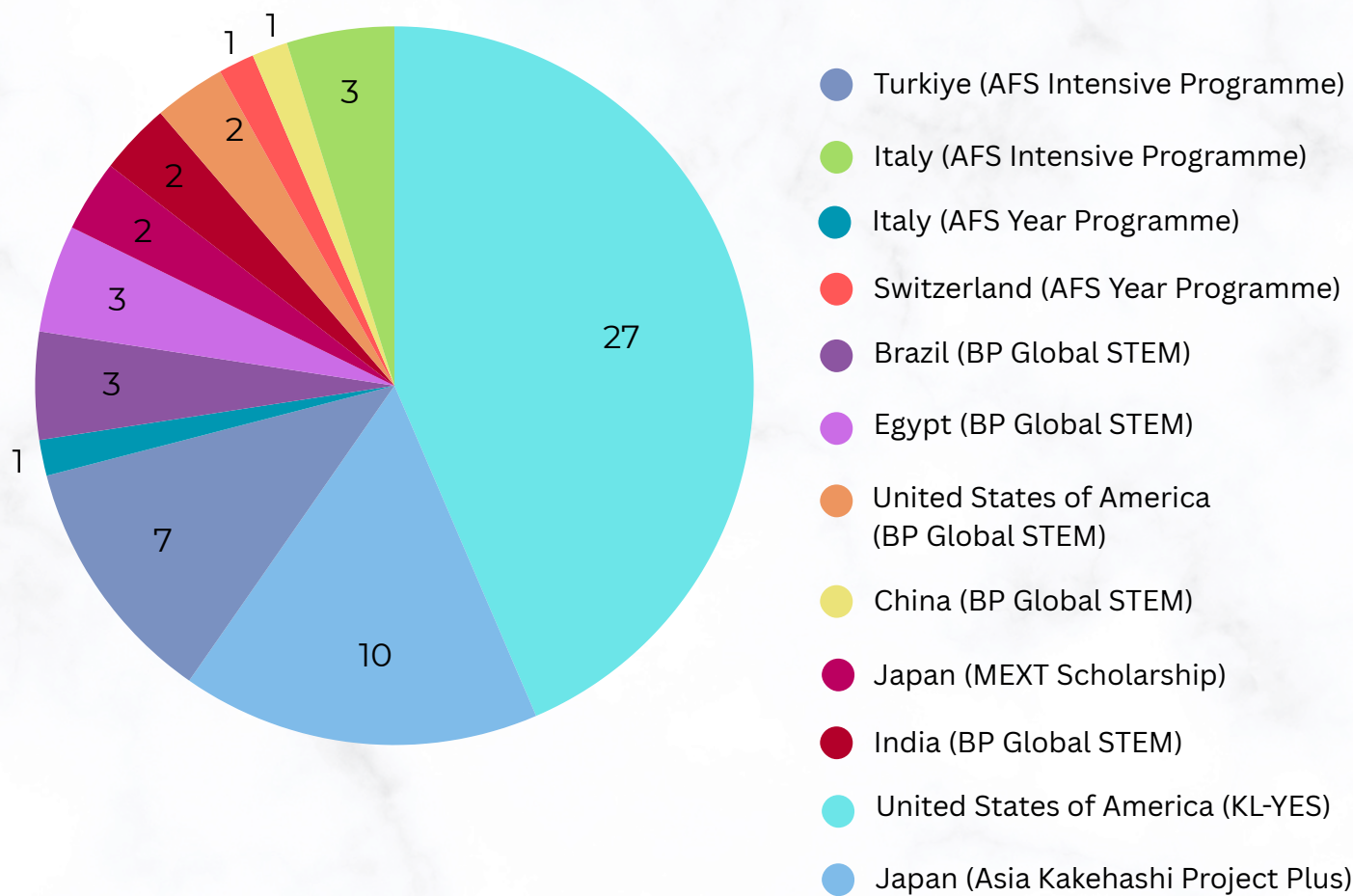
These sponsorships demonstrate the strength of international partnerships and reflect a shared commitment to nurturing future global citizens.

In addition to international sponsorships, Yayasan AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia awarded full scholarships to 2 students, enabling them to participate in transformative Intensive Programme to Türkiye without financial barriers. These awards reinforce the foundation's commitment to equity, access and inclusive intercultural learning; whereby 2 students from the B40 community were awarded a full scholarship for a two months programme.

Furthermore, the foundation received a scholarship through The Phillip & Mark Friendship Award, an initiative established by two friends who share a deep belief in the mission of delivering excellence and meaningful impact through student exchange programmes. The scholarship was awarded to a student from a rural community in Sabah, who was given the opportunity to participate in the Intensive Programme in Türkiye.

These scholarships align with our priority to expand scholarship opportunities and strengthening fundraising efforts, enabling us to give back to the community and support students who may not have the financial means to participate in an exchange programme. We continue to seek opportunities for scholarships that will enable more Malaysians to embark on this intercultural opportunities.

The following presents a detailed breakdown of participants for the (outbound) sending programme in 2024:



How AFS Develops the Active Global Citizens





1. Kolej Tingkatan 6 Seri Ipoh, Perak organized an enriching activity where participants immersed themselves in country life and explored the beautiful padi fields.
2. Global STEM Programme participants before departing to Egypt with their chaperone.
3. The SH24 participants at their Mid-Stay Orientation.
4. NH23 students hosted in Kedah participated in a padi planting activity at Kuala Dulang Kecil, Yan, Kedah.
5. The outbound Pre-Departure Orientation for NH24 participants to Switzerland and Italy, respectively.
6. AFS Malaysia met with YB Datuk Ahmad Fahmi bin Mohamed Fadzil to share insights about our organization and its impactful work.
7. An opportunity of a lifetime for our AFS Malaysia representative to the AFS Youth Assembly 2024, M Ruban Murugan to meet Mr. Daniel Obst, President and CEO of AFS Intercultural Programmes.



VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

In 2024, Yayasan AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia continued to prioritise the growth and development of its volunteer network, recognising it as a cornerstone of the organisation's mission. This focus aligned with Priority #3 of the AFS New Strategy: Create the Best Volunteer Experience, reinforcing our identity as a volunteer-driven organisation and ensuring meaningful, sustained engagement across all levels.

Throughout the year, we implemented several initiatives to enhance volunteer involvement and support. The AFS Alumni/Returnee Engagement & Get-Together reconnected returnees with the organisation and promoted ongoing participation. The Chapter & Alumni Leaders' Meeting provided a space for strategic dialogue, collaboration and sharing of best practices. To better support volunteers, the Virtual Liaison Person Workshop equipped the liaison persons with tools to assist hosted students and families effectively.

The AFS Leaders Retreat offered in-person leadership development and team-building opportunities, aligning chapter goals and reinforcing unity. The AFS Alumni Reunion honoured the enduring relationships and contributions of our alumni community.

Key structural improvements also took shape to strengthen the volunteer journey. We began redefining chapter coverage areas—from broad state-wide zones to more realistic geographical groupings, ensuring more focused support and improved volunteer performance. To expand alumni networks at the local level, we reintroduced potluck-style events to break boundaries and ensure inclusivity in chapter activities, while also re-engaging alumni in chapter operations to broaden AFS's positioning as a truly volunteer-led movement.

We increased outreach to returnees through networking events and informal meetups, providing platforms for idea exchange and new opportunities through their contacts and networks. Efforts were also made to reincorporate the returnee experience into the organisation, creating a bridge for future programme development rooted in lived experiences.

To ensure a structured and supportive volunteer journey, we expanded our Volunteer Induction Programmes, enhanced integration activities and maintained a calendar of structured annual events. We also worked to provide diverse volunteer opportunities, ensuring that each individual could contribute in ways that reflect their strengths and aspirations.

By combining virtual and in-person platforms, refining support structures, and expanding engagement opportunities, we continued to reinforce our commitment to a resilient, empowered and connected volunteer community, central to our mission of developing active global citizens through intercultural learning.



The AFS Leaders comprising the board, the chapter leaders, the alumni leaders and the staff at the 2024 AFS Leaders Retreat.



1. The Ministry of Education (MOE) officials with AFS stakeholders during the Intercultural Learning (ICL) workshop in May 2024..

2. The participants and trainers at the Orientation Facilitators Workshop 2024.

3. Anisah Abdul Halim the Best Volunteer Award 2024 recipient from Malaysia, was honoured during the AAI meeting in Cebu, Philippines.

4. The SH24 Japanese participants at their Arrival Orientation, where they actively took part in various orientation activities.

TRAINING, LEARNING & EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Training, Learning & Education

In 2024, we continued our strong commitment to fostering intercultural understanding and global citizenship through a range of training, learning and education initiatives. Building on its long-standing mission, AFS Malaysia adapted to evolving educational landscapes, incorporating both virtual and hybrid approaches to maximize reach while strengthening internal capacity to enhance our educational impact.

Key Highlights and Programmes

1. Intercultural Learning (ICL) Programmes: AFS Malaysia actively explored and implemented various training programmes utilizing AFS Intercultural Learning (ICL) modules. These programmes targeted diverse audiences, including:

- **Educators:** Workshops and programmes were offered to teachers and school administrators to enhance their intercultural competency skills. A significant international virtual teacher training programme allowed educators to earn an AFS Global Competence Certificate (GCC), focusing on topics like empathy, active listening, addressing stereotypes, communication styles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This programme aimed to empower educators to develop active global citizens in their classrooms while securing their in-service training for the year (LaDaP) acknowledged and approved by the Teachers Professionalism Department (BPG) at the Ministry of Education.
- **Primary and Secondary School Students:** We continued to engage students through various intercultural learning activities. The "Kelab Antarabudaya" (Intercultural Clubs) initiative expanded its reach, supporting local teachers in making a global impact within schools across various states. This included virtual and in-person sessions for both secondary and primary schools through the support of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia during our roadshows and marketing campaigns.

- **Volunteers:** Recognizing the crucial role of its volunteers, AFS Malaysia provided continuous learning opportunities. Post-COVID, we adopted hybrid learning platforms, with virtual modules (using platforms like Zoom, Mentimeter, Kahoot) followed by in-person workshops to build capacity for chapter committees, alumni, host families, educators, liaison persons, facilitators and mentors.

2. Global Competence Certificate (GCC) for Educators: AFS Malaysia actively promoted and facilitated participation in the virtual GCC programme, enabling educators to gain valuable certification in global competence. This programme is a cornerstone of their efforts to equip teachers with the skills to foster global citizenship.

3. Challenges and Adaptations

In 2024, we continued to navigate the landscape of post-pandemic recovery. While participant numbers showed gradual improvement, the organization remained adaptable, leveraging virtual and hybrid models to ensure continuity and accessibility of its programmes. The focus remained on strategic planning to reignite interest and participation in their various initiatives.

4. Future Outlook and Sustained Impact

AFS Malaysia is confident in its strategic plan for continued growth in the coming years. We're committed to expanding our intercultural learning offerings, empowering educators and firmly establishing AFS as the leading intercultural training provider for corporations. This is in line with our network strategy of enhancing our profile as an educational organization. By also continuing to provide life-changing exchange opportunities, AFS Malaysia is dedicated to developing active global citizens who contribute to a more peaceful, just, equitable and sustainable future. We are dedicated to fostering intercultural understanding and global competence development across all our programmes.



1. The AFS Leaders Retreat 2024 participants presenting on Priority #3, create the best volunteer experience.
2. The AFS Leaders Retreat 2024 lucky draw winner Tok Fen Fen, receiving her voucher from the Chairman.
3. AFS Sabah Chapter hosted the Global AFS Malaysia Exchange Programme 2024 (G.A.M.E 2024).
4. The Board of Directors with a volunteer during the AFS Leaders Retreat 2024.
5. Our AFS Alumni from Germany, Jeanne Fang, is attending to prospective outbound participants at the 21st Private & International School Fair in Kuala Lumpur.

LEADERSHIP

AFS MALAYSIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024

Mr. Abdul Halim Bin Othman
Mrs. Shahera @ Suhaila Bt Shamsuddin
Mr. Ozair Bin Omar
Mrs. Shoba Devi A/P A.Balakrishnan

AFS MALAYSIA NATIONAL OFFICE 2024

National Director

Mr. Kuhan Kandiah Chelvanathan
(Effective 1st October 2024)

Senior Programme Executive

Mrs. Farah Nadia Samsudin

Sending Programme Executive

Mrs. Najmin Roslan

Junior Programme Executive

Mr. Muhammad Mustaqeem Bin Mohd Anuar
(Effective July 2024)

Junior Executive

Mr. M Ruban Murugan
(Effective 1st November 2024)

Business Development & Communication Executive

Ms. Parvnasre BatuMalai
(Effective 24th October 2024)

Accounts & Finance

Ms. Kautsar Ismail

CHAPTERS

Dr. Hari Ram Ramayya

Perlis Chapter

Mrs. Rohaya Md Yusof

Kedah Chapter

Datin Teo Hwee Ai

Penang Chapter

Mr. Lucas Asirvatham

Perak Chapter

Mrs. Anisah Abdul Halim

Kelantan Chapter

Mr. Long Tin Piau

Terengganu Chapter

Mrs. Wendy Yap Moi Yeon

Kuantan Chapter

Mrs. Nuriah Manap

Ampang Chapter

Mrs. Santhi M Raju

Damansara Chapter

Mr. Lee Nicco

Klang Chapter

Ms. Rafa Koh

Negeri Sembilan Chapter

Mr. Charlie Teo Chun Chieh

Johor Chapter

Mrs. Tok Fen Fen

Sabah Chapter

Mr. Wan Ahmad Mustaqim

Bin Ahmad Zakhi

YES Alumni

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Embassies/ High Commissions

Embassy of Belgium
Embassy of Brazil
Embassy of China
Embassy of Czech Republic
Embassy of Denmark
Embassy of Egypt
Embassy of Germany
Embassy of Italy
Embassy of Japan
Embassy of Switzerland
Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines
Embassy of the United States of America
Embassy of Turkiye
Indian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur

Ministries/ Government Agencies

Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE)

- School Management Division (BPSH)
- Special School Education Division (BPK)
- Curriculum Development Centre (BSKK)
- Cluster/Fully Residential School (BSBP)
- Teacher's Professionalism Division (BPG)
- State Education Departments of All States (JPN)

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia (MOFA)
Ministry of Communication Malaysia (K-KOMM)
Immigration Department of Malaysia (JIM)



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AFS Malaysia



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