



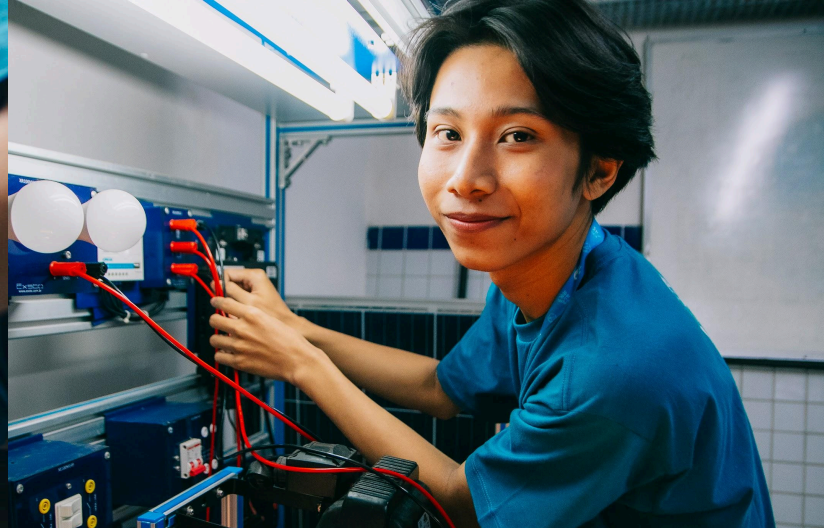
AFS GLOBAL STEM

CHANGEMAKERS

2025 Impact Report

Presented by AFS Intercultural Programs





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AFS & bp: Breaking Down Barriers to STEM Education

Partnership Case Study

Through the **AFS Global STEM Changemakers Initiative** – a five-year commitment to empower 5,000 people with access to **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) – AFS and bp are advancing global education and building the skills needed for a more sustainable future. The Initiative impacts diverse communities around the world – **from Papua to Pune, from Texas to Teesside, and many places in between.**

Since **2012**, bp has partnered with AFS to fund scholarships that foster global competence, strengthen pathways into STEM, and advance diversity and inclusion. In **2022**, the partnership evolved significantly with a landmark **\$14.9 million commitment to scale this effort, expanding access to STEM learning for 5,000 scholars over five years**, including underrepresented groups such as young women, People of Color, Indigenous Peoples, and refugees. AFS was selected for this investment in recognition of its mission-driven impact, educational expertise, and extensive global network of teachers, schools, and volunteers.

Global STEM programs equip diverse learners and educators with the critical competencies to tackle global challenges, including design thinking, data literacy, collaboration, and social innovation. The Initiative also cultivates a **thriving alumni community**, offering continued opportunities for professional growth, skills development, networking, and engagement.



1,738 scholars from 76 countries have traveled on Global STEM mobility programs since 2022, which have been hosted in **11** countries thus far: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the USA.



2,176 scholars from 125 countries have participated in fully-virtual Global STEM exchanges, cutting-edge, nontraditional models for global education. These programs expand access to intercultural learning, meet the growing demand for critical digital proficiencies, and include underrepresented groups who face barriers to traditional study abroad experiences.



The Global STEM Changemakers Initiative has earned major accolades in international education, including the *PIEoneer of the Year Award* for program innovation, the Forum on Education Abroad's *Award for Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals*, and DA Global's *Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion in International Education*.

AFS Global STEM Program Portfolio

The Global STEM Changemakers portfolio comprises **six distinct programs**, delivered through a blend of virtual learning, facilitated dialogue, and short-term travel and exchange experiences, tailored to diverse audiences and key geographies.

AFS GLOBAL STEM ACADEMIES

Modality: 16-week hybrid exchange (12 weeks virtual, 4 weeks travel)
Audience: Teens (15-17.5 years old) from select countries
Themes: STEM, social impact, energy, sustainability
Special Focus: Academies have run in nine countries (Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, Germany, India, the Netherlands, UK, USA), introducing scholars to STEM and sustainability in diverse cultural contexts

AFS GLOBAL STEM ACCELERATORS

Modality: 12-week virtual exchange
Audience: Young women (15-17.5 years old) worldwide
Themes: STEM, design thinking, social innovation, prototyping
Special Focus: Outreach conducted with SPARK, Teach for All, and Girls Toward Leadership to include refugee and displaced young women

AFS GLOBAL STEM INNOVATORS

Modality: 6-week domestic exchange (5 weeks virtual, 1 week travel)
Audience: Teens (15-17 years old) in specific geographies
Themes: STEM, intercultural skills, sustainability, energy challenges
Special Focus: Innovators programs have run in six countries (Australia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, UK, USA), bringing special focus to STEM and energy challenges on a national and local scale

AFS GLOBAL STEM EDUCATORS

Modality: 5-week virtual exchange
Audience: Secondary-level STEM educators, globally
Themes: STEM and sustainability in the classroom, global competence
Special Focus: Teachers and schools in underrepresented communities

AFS GLOBAL STEM CHANGEMAKERS AUSTRALIA - NEW ZEALAND

Modality: 12-week virtual exchange
Audience: Teens (15-17.5 years old) in Australia and New Zealand
Themes: Local sustainability challenges, design thinking, social impact
Special Focus: 20% of scholarships allocated to Indigenous youth



Modality: Multi-day youth conference and skill-building workshops
Audience: Young adult leaders (ages 18-35), worldwide
Themes: Climate action, education, human rights, advancing the SDGs
Special Focus: High-impact thematic workshops that strengthen applied learning for young adult leaders, educators, and changemakers; Program partners include the United Nations, Penn, and NYU



2025 Highlights & Key Results

Expanding Reach, Deepening Impact Worldwide

In a time marked by increasing global uncertainty and extreme polarization – from geopolitical tensions and economic turbulence to climate crises and the rapid rise of AI – the need for globally competent, collaborative problem-solvers will only continue to grow. The Global STEM Changemakers Initiative rises to meet this moment, equipping young people and educators with the skills, perspectives, and networks to navigate change and drive positive impact in an increasingly complex world.

2025, the Initiative's fourth year, marked a pivotal moment for scale and impact. The Global STEM suite supported **1,154** scholars from **92** countries, bringing the Initiative to **80%** completion of its five-year goal. The following highlights showcase the year's key results, milestones, and impact in action.



1,154 Scholarships

awarded across 6 programs



92 Countries

represented



11,900+ Applicants

from around the world



104 Peer Mentors

supporting current scholars



Sustainability Award

from The Forum on
Education Abroad



2 New Programs

launched in India & USA



+38% Growth

in Alumni Community members



985 Certificates

issued by AFS & Penn CSIS

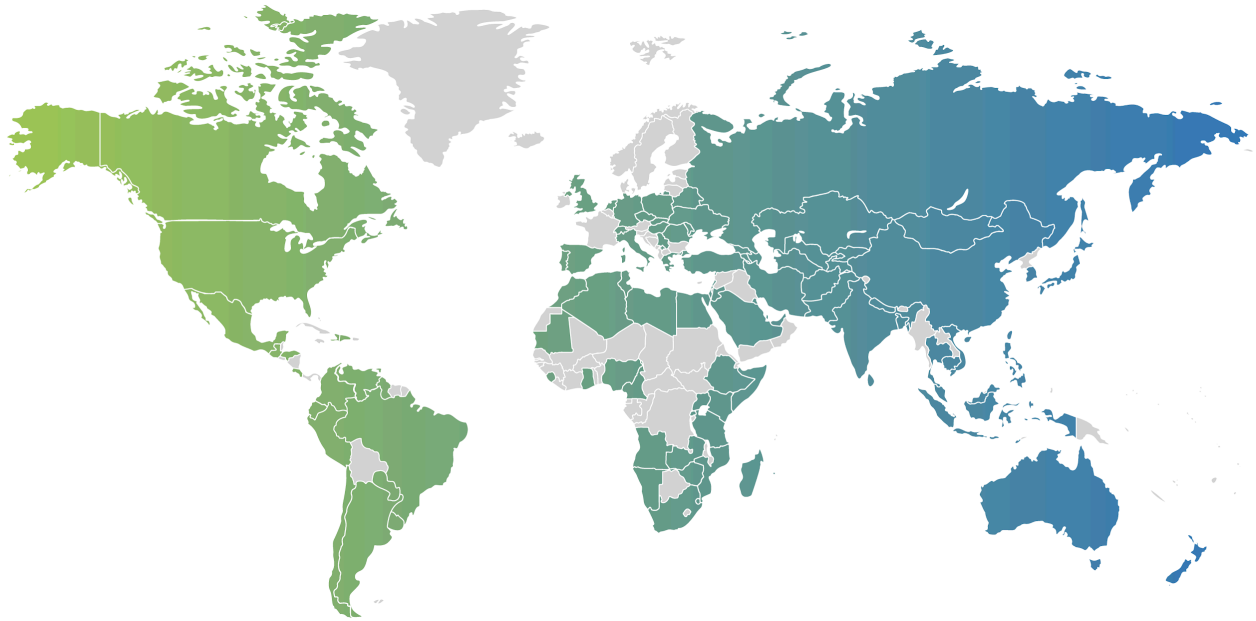


4.8/5 Rating

overall satisfaction

Global Reach: Where Scholars Came From

1,154 scholars from 92 countries participated across all programs in 2025 (virtual and mobility)



Demographic Summary

The 2025 cohort demographics reflect the Initiative's global reach and diversity of perspectives.¹

2025 Program Participants	Grand Total	Academies	Accelerators	AUS/NZL	Innovators	Educators	Youth Assembly
# Scholars	1,154	148	363	54	194	255	140
• Female	854	92	363	35	105	155	104
• Male	295	54	-	18	87	100	36
• Nonbinary	5	2	0	1	2	0	0
Countries Represented	92	16	69	2	4	38	47
People of Color	925	122	301	35	149	235	83
Refugee or Displaced Persons	25	1	20	2	1	1	0
Indigenous Persons	30	3	5	15	1	4	2
Low-Income SES	528	59	199	16	69	144	41
# bp Employee Children	33	10	6	1	16	-	-
# bp Employees	5	-	-	-	-	-	5

¹ Demographic information on race/ethnicity, refugee/displaced status, income and socioeconomic status (SES) is collected voluntarily and is not mandatory for program admission or participation. Participants may opt to withhold this information.

Mobility Destinations: Where Scholars Traveled

482 scholars from 50 countries traveled to **nine** destinations hosting mobility programs
(Academies, Innovators, and Youth Assembly)



USA | 140

📍 New York, NY



AFS GLOBAL STEM
INNOVATORS

USA | 26

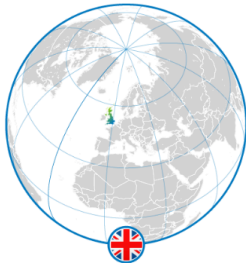
📍 Houston, TX



AFS GLOBAL STEM
ACADEMIES

Brazil | 36

📍 Natal & Rio de Janeiro



AFS GLOBAL STEM
INNOVATORS

United Kingdom | 21

📍 Aberdeen & Teesside



AFS GLOBAL STEM
ACADEMIES

Egypt | 36

📍 Cairo



AFS GLOBAL STEM
ACADEMIES

China | 35

📍 Beijing, Shanghai, Ningbo



AFS GLOBAL STEM
ACADEMIES

India | 27

📍 Indore



AFS GLOBAL STEM
INNOVATORS

India | 44

📍 Pune



AFS GLOBAL STEM
INNOVATORS

Indonesia | 69

📍 Jakarta



Global STEM Academies

Convening Future Changemakers in STEM & Sustainability

The Global STEM Academies are full-scholarship exchange programs for teens (ages 15-17.5) that strengthen sustainability and STEM knowledge through **interactive, hands-on learning** while developing **critical global competencies** such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, intercultural understanding, and social innovation. Program content emphasizes **the energy transition, sustainability, and positive social impact**, while enabling scholars to collaborate with diverse global peers. The Academies provide students with immersive experiences that build global competencies and prepare them to thrive in a global economy.

The Academies combine a cutting-edge **12-week virtual exchange** with a **four-week experience abroad**. The virtual program, co-developed with the **University of Pennsylvania Center for Social Impact Strategy (Penn CSIS)**, culminates in student-led capstone projects addressing real-world sustainability challenges. Scholars who successfully complete the program receive the Advanced Certificate on Global Competence for Social Impact, validation and feedback from Penn CSIS, and are invited to join the AFS Global STEM alumni network for continued networking, mentorship, and professional development.

Key Details

- **Recruitment:** Applications ran from 15 November 2024 - 15 January 2025, inviting **applicants from 16 countries:** Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Egypt, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, the UK, and the USA.
- **Applications:** **7,068 received** – a **16% increase** from 2024, and the highest volume thus far.
- **Awardees:** **148 scholars from 16 countries**, including **10 children of bp employees**.
- **Program Dates:** The virtual exchange ran from **8 March - 7 June**, with in-person Academies to follow in July and August (*see the following page for more detail*).
- **Certification:** **145 scholars (98%)** earned Penn CSIS certification for their social impact capstones.

After completing the virtual exchange, scholars participate in a four-week immersive travel component in **Brazil, China, Egypt, or India**. In-person programming further **develops critical STEM skills, fosters intercultural understanding, and engages students in sustainability and local innovation**, while providing hands-on cultural experiences.

Brazil Academy | Natal & Rio de Janeiro: 12 July - 8 August 2025

36 scholars traveled to Brazil to explore **renewable energies and innovations** alongside the cultural richness of Brazil. Site visits included the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, the Brain Institute, IFRN, and the Digital Metropolis Institute. Scholars engaged with STEM innovations including **biofuels, wind and solar energy, and aerospace technologies**, and presented their capstone projects to **bp Brazil** in Rio de Janeiro. They enjoyed a homestay with Brazilian host families and workshops with local students.

China Academy | Beijing, Shanghai & Ningbo: 8 July - 4 August 2025

At this multi-destination Academy, **35 scholars** traveled around China to connect with STEM leaders, university professors, and peers while exploring **sustainable energy and innovation**. Activities included **robotics challenges, drone flights and flight simulation, 3D printing**, and immersive courses at University of Nottingham Ningbo, as well as visits to cultural landmarks like the **Great Wall**. Scholars noted collaboration with Chinese peers and special host family stays as cultural highlights of the experience.

Egypt Academy | Cairo: 18 July - 17 August 2025

36 scholars traveled to Egypt for a **STREAM-focused program** integrating **robotics, engineering, sustainability, and green energy projects**, alongside cultural experiences, music, and the arts. Scholars participated in **interactive workshops**, networking with **bp Egypt**, **immersive site visits** including the Great Pyramids of Giza, and **community service in sustainability**, such as a Nile cleanup day. Scholars described exploring heritage sites, living with host families, and learning local customs as powerful and transformative.

India Academy | Indore: 18 July - 17 August 2025

In India, **27 scholars** engaged in **hands-on STEM workshops on robotics, coding, and engineering**, while studying at India's top-rated international secondary school, **Emerald Heights**. The program included hands-on site visits such as **IIT Indore** and **NATRAX** automotive testing facilities, service learning projects, and rich cultural immersion. Scholars highlighted **peer collaboration, exploring mobility and sustainability innovations, and connecting with STEM professionals** for bolstering their future pathways into STEM.

Satisfaction Surveys

The 2025 Academies cohort rated the program highly, with an average score of **4.7 out of 5**, evaluating both the overall program satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with specific program content such as STEM, sustainability, social impact, and global competence. *See the Satisfaction Evaluation section for further detail.*

Academy	Overall Satisfaction	STEM	Sustainability	Social Impact	Global Competence
Average	4.7	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.4
Brazil	4.9	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.6
China	4.7	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.3
Egypt	4.8	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.3
India	4.5	3.6	3.9	4.1	4.5



Global STEM Accelerators

Expanding Access to STEM Education for Young Women Worldwide

The AFS Global STEM Accelerators is an **award-winning virtual exchange program that breaks down barriers to STEM education** and empowers young people – particularly underrepresented young women – to become changemakers through social innovation, intercultural competence, and sustainable development. Over a **12-week virtual exchange** curriculum, co-developed with the **University of Pennsylvania Center for Social Impact Strategy (Penn CSIS)**, scholars deepen problem-solving, data literacy, and design thinking skills while developing a social impact capstone project addressing a local or global sustainability challenge. Scholars earn the Advanced Certificate in Global Competence for Social Impact, paired with personalized feedback.

Key Details

- **Program Dates: 31 May – 31 August 2025** (Applications ran from 28 February – 30 April 2025).
- **Applications:** AFS received **1,394** total applications from **79** countries.
- **Awardees: 365 scholars from 70 countries**, including **20** refugees or internally displaced young women from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Haiti, and Ukraine, as well as **five** Indigenous participants.
- **Certification: 327 scholars (90%)** earned Penn CSIS certification for their social impact capstones.

Focus on Inclusion & Access

The Global STEM Accelerators prioritizes **equity and access**, supporting learners from underserved communities, including **refugees and displaced youth**. AFS works with local partners to provide Wi-Fi-enabled tablets, data packages, or technical support to learners in need, to ensure all scholars can fully participate. AFS strengthens outreach to underserved communities through several key partnerships:

- **SPARK** – an international NGO creating academic and career pathways in fragile nations
- **Teach For All** – a nonprofit network expanding educational opportunities globally
- **Girls Toward Leadership** – a nonprofit capacity-building network for young women in Afghanistan

Through these partnerships, AFS earmarks **20%** of the scholarships for refugees and displaced young women worldwide – whether from war, violence, or natural disaster – giving young women much-needed opportunities for seats at the STEM table.



Global STEM Changemakers: Australia - New Zealand

Inspiring Young People to Create Local Impact

In its second year, the **Global STEM Changemakers: Australia – New Zealand** program engaged 54 teens from across Australia and New Zealand in a **regional adaptation of AFS’s award-winning social impact curriculum**, drawing on the Penn CSIS academic framework used in the Global STEM Accelerators. Over the course of 12 weeks, scholars participate in interactive dialogue sessions, hands-on design challenges, and mentorship opportunities, while developing practical, testable prototypes that advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The scholars’ capstone projects tackle pressing sustainability challenges throughout Australia, New Zealand, and the broader Asia-Pacific region, providing a **locally relevant approach** toward building global competence and social impact skills.

Key Details

- **Recruitment:** Applications ran from 7 March - 15 April 2025. AFS received **119** eligible applications from candidates throughout Australia and New Zealand.
- **Awardees:** A diverse cohort of **54 scholars** was selected, including **15 Indigenous scholars (28%)** from Aboriginal and Māori communities.
- **Program Dates:** The virtual exchange ran from **2 May - 26 July 2025**.
- **Certification:** **41 scholars (75%)** earned Penn CSIS certification for their social impact capstones.

Indigenous Engagement

A minimum of **20%** of the scholarships are earmarked for Indigenous students from the Aboriginal, Māori, Torres Strait Islander, and Pasifika communities, to help uplift and build more pathways for diverse future leaders in STEM. The program is delivered in collaboration with AFS International, AFS New Zealand, Value Learning, and Friends of AFS Australia (FAFSA).

“The program was an amazing way to build my confidence and knowledge. Merging STEM with culture and global awareness taught me how to make a meaningful, effective impact on my community.”

– **Bayley Hopkins**, Changemaker from Ngongotahā, New Zealand



Global STEM Innovators

Introducing Young Leaders to Pathways in STEM

The PISA Global Competence Assessment², a global benchmark in secondary education, reveals that **young people believe their behavior impacts the world, but are unsure how to tackle global challenges they see.**

With this in mind, the **Global STEM Innovators** program empowers teens (ages 14-17) to collaborate with diverse peers and develop skills needed to advance a sustainable future. Designed as a **domestic exchange**, the program is intended for young people with keen interest but limited prior exposure to STEM. Combining a five-week virtual exchange with a weeklong in-person workshop, participants explore topics in STEM, sustainability, and collaboration, while gaining hands-on experience with emerging and critical technologies.

Key Details

In 2025, AFS ran four Innovators cohorts, building on previous success in the UK and Indonesia, while piloting new editions in the United States and India.

- **Recruitment:** AFS received **1,564 applications (+46% growth from 2024)** in total.
- **Awardees:** **194 scholarships** awarded in total, across the four participating countries.
- **Certification:** **177 scholars (91%)** successfully earned AFS certification upon completion.

India Innovators | Pune: 18-24 June 2025

Newly piloted in 2025, the program introduced **50 scholars** from throughout India to explore innovation and sustainability with a workshop hosted at Flame University in Pune, India. Activities included a site visit to **bp's Technical Solutions India (TSI) Centre**; a **Gamified Futures** workshop using AI, scenario planning, and simulations; the **Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA)**; and workshops at **Sanjay Ghodawat International School (SGIS)**.

“From learning how to become active global citizens to meeting peers from different parts of the country come together for a common cause, it was one of the best experiences I have ever had.”

- Shourya Viren, Innovators scholar from Bengaluru, India

² OECD (2020), PISA 2018 Results (Volume VI): Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World?, Paris: OECD Publishing.

Indonesia Innovators | Jakarta: 10-15 November 2025

In its fourth edition since 2022, the program welcomed a diverse cohort of **75 scholars** (including **12 Indigenous scholars** from West Papua) to explore STEM innovation and develop collaborative projects. Key activities included a hands-on **robotics workshop**; visits to the Faculty of Computer Science at **Universitas Indonesia** and the **Indonesia Museum of Health and Medicine (IMERI)**; and a special program ceremony featuring delegates from **bp Indonesia** and **SKK Migas**. The program continues to reserve a minimum of **10% of the scholarships for Papuan youth**, with AFS Indonesia and bp Indonesia collaborating towards a shared goal of uplifting Papuan students and the Indigenous peoples of Indonesia.

“I enjoyed the experience so much. The workshop helped me step out of my comfort zone and become more brave and confident, thanks to the support from the people there. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of the program and for creating such a beautiful and unforgettable memory.”

- **Valentini Tande Rante**, Innovator from Bintuni, Papua Barat, Indonesia

UK Innovators | Aberdeen & Teesside: 3-9 August

In its third edition since 2023, the program continued as a distinctive dual-site experience, bringing scholars to both Aberdeen, Scotland and the Teesside region of England. Key activities and site visits included the **Engineering Enterprise** workshop at Aberdeen Science Centre; **Energy on the Move** mobile classroom via North East Scotland College; **Hydrasun Hydrogen Skills Academy**; **Materials Processing Institute**; Clean Energy Education Hub at **Redcar and Cleveland College**; and the **Teesworks Skills Academy**.

“The sessions were excellent and the activities were engaging. AFS made us feel safe and kept the experience interesting, while the leaders ensured safe travel. Thank you to everyone involved in both the online and in-person sessions – this was a great opportunity.”

- **Oluwabukunayomi Aderemi-Makinde**, Innovator from Reading, UK

USA Innovators | Houston: 18-24 July

Newly introduced in 2025, the program convened **28 scholars** from throughout the United States, for a week of in-depth programming, hosted at the **University of Houston**. Key site visits included a workshop at **bp America’s Helios campus**, immersive learning at **NASA’s Johnson Space Center**, and a volunteer service day at **Galveston Bay Foundation** to support wetlands habitat restoration and water-quality monitoring.

“The facilitators were all very helpful and kind, and I’m so grateful for this experience. I especially enjoyed the bp Day, which was fun and competitive, and the NASA visit with all of the hands-on experiences. Overall, I really enjoyed the workshop and loved getting to know new people.”

- **Celina Gao**, Innovator from Katy, Texas, USA



Global STEM Educators

Equipping Teachers with Tools for Sustainability Education

The **Global STEM Educators** is a professional development and certification program for secondary-level STEM teachers, equipping them to integrate **global competence, sustainability, and inclusive teaching practices** into their classrooms. Over a **five-week virtual exchange**, educators collaborate in diverse global cohorts, apply curated teaching resources and case studies, and build skills in **inquiry-based learning, intercultural dialogue, and education for sustainable development**.

The program emphasizes **practical application**, enabling educators to translate learning directly into classroom practice and strengthen capacity to guide students through complex global challenges, including climate change and artificial intelligence. By enhancing educator skills, the pathway supports **scalable development of future-ready STEM talent**.

Since launching in 2023, the program has engaged **764 educators from 59 countries**. Alumni report significant gains in core teaching competencies, including intercultural communication, critical thinking, and inquiry-based teaching methods. Educators earn the AFS Global Competence Certificate and join the global educator alumni network, fostering continued collaboration and amplifying program impact.

Key Details

- **Recruitment:** Applications ran in two cohorts: 28 February - 30 April and 6 June - 31 July 2025.
- **Applications:** AFS received **706** applications in total from **46** countries – a 24% increase from 2024.
- **Awardees:** **255 educators** from **38** countries were awarded in total.
- **Program Dates:** Two global cohorts ran from **31 May – 12 July** and **23 August – 4 October 2025**.
- **Certification:** **193 educators (76%)** completed and earned certification – **nearly double the industry average** of 40% for adult learners.

“AFS is helping me change how I teach Chemistry in Nigeria. I am now integrating skills not typically included in science curriculum, like peace education and active listening. As a result, I’ve seen significant improvement in my students’ participation and performance, and many teachers in my community have already requested copies of my lesson plan.”

- **Michael Folorunsho**, Educator from Lagos, Nigeria



AFS Youth Assembly

Empowering Young Global Citizens to Lead

The AFS Youth Assembly is a flagship global platform that equips young leaders and changemakers (ages 18-35) with the skills, networks, and perspective to drive real-world impact. The 30th Session / 2025 Edition convened from 5-10 August in New York City under the theme “*Defying Adversity: Empowering Young Global Citizens to Lead*,” bringing together hundreds of participants from more than 80 countries.

Thanks to bp’s sponsorship, AFS awarded **140** full scholarships to participants from **47** countries, including 62 alumni from Global STEM programs, 48 educators, and 30 Climate Entrepreneurs – creating a diverse and globally connected cohort of emerging leaders. The scholars participate in one of **four thematic Academies at the Youth Assembly**:

- **Climate Entrepreneurship:** In partnership with **New York University (NYU) School of Professional Studies, Center for Global Affairs**, participants gain practical and theoretical insight into scaling climate-focused ventures, while prototyping ideas to innovate the climate-tech space.
- **Global Educators:** Hosted by AFS International in collaboration with AFS-USA, educators engage in interactive training to strengthen global citizenship education and develop intercultural competencies for their classrooms and communities.
- **Changemakers:** Hosted by the **University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Social Impact Strategy** in Philadelphia, participants learn the fundamentals of creating and testing ideas for social innovation and develop prototypes to solve global challenges.
- **International Affairs:** Hosted in collaboration with **United Nations** Permanent Missions, delegates engage with key issues in international affairs and sustainable development, learning directly from practitioners and policymakers.

Applications for 2025 ran from 22 November 2024 - 20 January 2025, generating **975** applications from **89** countries. Among the full scholarship winners were **five standout bp employees** in the Climate Academy.

“To meet the world’s energy needs, we need fresh perspectives and bold ideas – and that’s where you come in. We’re proud of our partnership with AFS and the power of this group... the ripple effect. The energy you take back, that’s where real change begins.”

- **Nadine McCrory**, Head of Education & Employability, bp
Opening address, Climate Entrepreneurship Academy at NYU



Global Competence Assessment

Measuring Key Learning Outcomes

AFS programs are designed to **develop global competence and foster active global citizenship**. Global competence is defined as the multidimensional capacity to successfully apply **knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values** effectively to global issues and intercultural situations. Core dimensions include:

- Adaptability
- Critical thinking
- Self-awareness
- Open-mindedness
- Valuing difference
- Effective and appropriate communication
- Empathy
- Global awareness
- Changemaking

AFS defines **active global citizens** as individuals whose informed, compassionate, and ethical decision-making contributes to a more just, peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world. Developing active global citizens is central to the AFS educational framework³ and mission.

Active Global Citizens:

- **Value and belong** to a common and diverse world
- **Inquire critically** about the world around them
- **Understand and relate** to others across differences
- **Take action** toward collective well-being

Research shows that intercultural learning enhances critical and comparative thinking, problem-solving and collaboration skills, and more effective communication⁴. These gains, in turn, help people to better understand and engage with others and can positively impact one's career, community, and personal environments.



³ AFS Intercultural Programs (2024), Developing Active Global Citizens: A Framework for Active Global Citizenship.

⁴ British Council, Ipsos, Booz Allen Hamilton, et al. (2013), Culture at Work: The value of intercultural skills in the workplace.

Global Competence Development in Youth

AFS measures global competence development in youth through pre- and post-program self-assessments aligned with the **OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)**⁵. Scores are aggregated into an index mapped to AFS learning outcomes.

AFS Learning Outcomes	OECD Global Competence Index
Critical thinking; Empathy	Perspective-taking
Adaptability	Adaptability
Self-awareness; Effective and appropriate communication	Awareness of intercultural communication
Open-mindedness	Openness toward other cultures
Valuing difference	Respect for other cultures
Global awareness	Global-mindedness
Changemaking	Engagement with global issues

Key Findings – Youth Participants

Global STEM participants **demonstrated improvement in all seven global competence dimensions measured**, with the strongest gains in perspective-taking (+6%) and engagement with global issues (+6%).

Global Competence Dimensions	Pre-Program	Post-Program	Percent Change
Overall Average	4.37	4.54	4%
Perspective-Taking	4.11	4.38	6%
Adaptability	4.16	4.36	5%
Awareness of Intercultural Communication	4.51	4.65	3%
Engagement with Global Issues & Capacity to Take Action	3.96	4.19	6%
Openness	4.61	4.67	1%
Respect	4.82	4.85	1%
Global-Mindedness	4.44	4.65	5%

Global Competence Development in Educators

While global competence development in youth focuses primarily on one's interpersonal skills and intercultural awareness, AFS gauges global competence in educators using the **Globally Competent Teaching Self-Assessment** – which measures educators' ability to apply global competencies in educational

⁵ OECD (2018), Preparing Our Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable World: The OECD PISA Global Competence Framework.

settings. This assessment is based on the **ASCD's Globally Competent Learning Continuum⁶** (GCLC), and evaluates 12 key dispositions, knowledge areas, and skills that define globally-competent teaching.

Key Findings – Educators

Global STEM Educators demonstrated **significant improvement in all 12 of the globally-competent teaching dimensions measured**, and especially notable increases in evaluating context-specific methods of inquiry and assessment (+46%), understanding of intercultural communication (+32%), and the ability to facilitate active listening, critical thinking, and perspective recognition (+28%).

Globally Competent Teaching Dimensions	Pre-Program	Post-Program	Percent Change
Overall Average	3.13	3.78	22%
Empathy and valuing multiple perspectives	3.63	3.93	8%
Advancing equity	3.39	3.83	13%
Understanding of global conditions and events	3.35	4.10	23%
Understanding of global interconnectedness	3.08	3.70	20%
Understanding of multiple cultures	3.13	3.73	19%
Understanding of intercultural communication	2.97	3.92	32%
Enhancing communication styles and modalities	3.66	3.94	8%
Fostering diversity and global engagement	3.35	3.84	15%
Integrating content-aligned experiential learning	3.26	4.01	23%
Facilitating active listening, critical thinking, and perspective recognition	2.61	3.37	29%
Developing real-world contexts for learning	2.77	3.51	27%
Evaluating context-specific methods of inquiry and assessment	2.39	3.49	46%

Alumni Impact Study with the University of Notre Dame

As the Global STEM Changemakers Initiative nears the fifth year of its initial five-year cycle, AFS is partnering with the **University of Notre Dame - Global Center for the Development of the Whole Child (GC-DWC)** to measure its lasting impact. Through mixed-method evaluation – including surveys, alumni tracking, in-depth interviews, and case studies – the study will examine learning outcomes, career readiness, leadership growth, and personal development. Launched in July 2025 and expected to conclude in late 2026, findings from the study will help guide future program design, amplify alumni impact, and strengthen evidence-based advocacy for Global STEM programming.

⁶ Tichnor-Wagner, A., Parkhouse, H., Glazier, J., Cain, J. M. (2019). *Becoming a Globally Competent Teacher*. United States: ASCD.



Satisfaction Evaluation

At the conclusion of each program, scholars provide feedback on their experiences, including curriculum, facilitated dialogue, program logistics, and overall preparedness. The table below summarizes **overall satisfaction scores and Net Promoter Scores (NPS)**⁷ across the full suite of programs.

Program	Overall Satisfaction (1-5)	Net Promoter Score
Overall Average	4.8	80
Academies	4.7	77
Accelerators	4.9	94
Australia-New Zealand	4.5	51
Innovators	4.9	92
Educators	4.8	86
Youth Assembly	4.7	77

While there is no single global benchmark for NPS in international education, the Forum on Education Abroad suggests that an **NPS of 50+ is considered a strong result** for experience-based learning programs. In this context, AFS Global STEM programs **significantly exceed** these benchmarks, with an **overall NPS of 80** – reflecting exceptionally high participant satisfaction.

Qualitative Feedback

To complement quantitative results, AFS conducted a structured sentiment analysis using the **Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner (VADER)**, a lexicon- and rule-based methodology for analyzing qualitative data at scale. Analysis of responses from **~1,000** participants indicates consistently high satisfaction. Key drivers of satisfaction identified in this analysis include:

- **Program Impact:** Engaging curriculum, effective facilitation, perceived skill-building
- **Employability:** Clear connections to employability, job skills, and future opportunities
- **Content:** STEM learning, sustainability, industry insights, and intercultural understanding
- **Attitudes:** Increased confidence, critical thinking, collaboration, and global engagement

⁷ A widely-used market research metric to gauge customer satisfaction and likelihood of recommending an experience or product to others.



Awards & Recognition

Honoring the Global STEM Changemakers Initiative & Alumni

The impact of the AFS Global STEM Changemakers Initiative is reflected both in institutional recognition and the remarkable achievements of its alumni. In March 2025, AFS International won **The Forum on Education Abroad’s Award for Advancing the SDGs Through Education Abroad** for its leadership in sustainability, equity, and global citizenship through the Global STEM Changemakers Initiative.

Around the world, Global STEM alumni are translating their skills and values into real-world impact – earning international awards, launching creative initiatives, and driving meaningful change in their communities. **A selection of alumni accomplishments in 2025 includes:**

- **Abhinav Agarwal (India, Academies ‘19 & YA ‘22):** As Head of Machine Learning at KOS AI, he helped launch a breakthrough needle-free glucose monitoring device, while simultaneously pursuing a dual BS/MS in Computer Science & Bioengineering at Stanford.
- **Oluwadamilola Akintewe (Nigeria, YA ‘25):** Won the \$10,000 AFS Young Global Citizens Award for her youth-led initiative, Project Rebirth, which provides skills training and micro-loans to empower women in Nigeria’s underserved communities.
- **Lucia Xiao (USA, Academies ‘25):** Won a \$5,000 grant from the Aspen Institute’s Center for Rising Generations for her project, BridGEN, a youth-led civic-tech initiative bridging the intergenerational digital and social divide through technology and storytelling.
- **Johari A. Barrientos-Murray (Spain/USA, Academies ‘25):** Received the \$7,000 AI Worden Endeavour Scholarship, a prestigious award that provides hands-on astronaut training, and was selected to represent Team USA at the NASA-affiliated Space Camp.
- **Maryam Zoweil (USA/Egypt, Academies ‘23 & YA ‘24):** Selected to present her workshop “Civics By Students, For Students” at SXSW EDU 2025 in Austin, TX (USA), and elected to the Boards of EcoRise and the Youth Climate Equity Council, leading youth-focused climate initiatives.
- **Richard Wonnsibe Tiimob (Ghana, Educators ‘25):** Won the 2025 Ghana Teacher Prize, “Most Outstanding Teacher,” awarded by the National Teaching Council and selected from over 600 candidates for his innovative, community-focused science teaching.

- **Moemen Sobh (Egypt, YA '23):** Selected for the Swarovski Foundation's *Creatives for Our Future* 2025 cohort (with the UN) for his project Visenleer, which turns marine waste into skills and income pathways for fishing communities in Port Said, Egypt.
- **Abigail Epongseh Mba'ah Mbatu (Cameroon, Accelerators '25):** Won "Outstanding Young Leader of the Year" at the Cameroon Youth Awards for driving innovation and community impact through her Girls for Global Impact organization and Hope Springs Foundation.
- **Diego Heitor da Silva Monteiro (Brazil, Academies '24):** First student from his state of Acre (Brazil) to be admitted to Princeton University, where he plans to study Computer & Data Sciences and hopes to pursue a career in sustainable development in the Amazon.
- **Siutiti Holani (USA, Accelerators '23 & YA '24):** Admitted to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (USA) as a first-generation college student, where she is pursuing Aeronautical Engineering and advocating for greater representation of Polynesian students in STEM.
- **Valeria Zegarra (Guatemala, Accelerators '22):** Named Director of Professional Development for the Women of Aeronautics and Astronautics (WoAA) at Arizona State University, where she studies Aerospace, Aeronautical, and Astronautical Engineering.
- **Danish Khan (India, Academies '23):** Selected as a Young South Asian Leaders Initiative (YSALI) Fellow by the U.S. Dept. of State, to address civic engagement and natural resource challenges across South Asia.
- **Rasheka Mahendra (Malaysia, Academies '21 & YA '23):** Published "Artificial Intelligence: A Game Changer in the Fight Against Terrorism?" in the *South East Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism Selection of Articles*, analyzing AI's role and ethical concerns in counter-terrorism.
- **Ambika Persad (Trinidad & Tobago, Academies '24 & YA '25):** Selected for the highly-competitive Harvard Ventures-TECH Summer Program, gaining hands-on experience with startups and executives while enhancing her skills in technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
- **Emily Wright (UK, Academies '22 & YA '25):** Won the AFS Youth Assembly "Stories of Change" competition for her advocacy on accessibility rights, leveraging her platform to promote more inclusive, Deaf-accessible initiatives worldwide.
- **Heritage Sanmi-Lawal (Nigeria/UK, YA '24):** Won the UN Women's *SDG 5 YOUth Photography Challenge* for her educational initiative combating sexual violence in Nigeria.
- **Sarena Singh (Trinidad & Tobago, Academies '24):** Selected for the Youth Ambassadors-Caribbean Exchange Program, hosted by the U.S. Dept. of State and Georgetown University.
- **Jahziel Saunders (Trinidad & Tobago, Accelerators '24 & YA '25):** Selected to the HundrED-International Baccalaureate Youth Ambassador Programme, to develop leadership and communication skills while advancing youth-led education innovation.
- **Abdelrahman Hafrag (Egypt, Academies '21 & YA '24):** Interviewed by NBC News for his experiences as an Academies scholar and Computer Engineering student at Drexel University.



Alumni Engagement

Fostering Professional Development, Leadership, and Lifelong Impact

AFS Global STEM alumni strengthen their skills, expand global networks, and support the next generation of STEM changemakers through mentorship, professional engagement, and peer leadership. As emerging leaders and role models, they play a pivotal role in advancing the Initiative's mission.

The Global STEM Changemakers Initiative offers **two distinct alumni networks – one for youth and one for educators** – ensuring continued growth and opportunities tailored to each community.

- **AFS Global STEM Alumni Community:** Alumni from the Academies, Accelerators, Innovators, and Australia–New Zealand programs join a rapidly growing global network of **1,750+ active members (+37% since 2024)**. Hosted on LinkedIn, the community connects young leaders to mentorship, higher education resources, internships, and employability opportunities – supporting their transition into university and STEM careers.
- **AFS Educator Alumni Network:** Global STEM Educators and Youth Assembly Global Educators Academy alumni join a newly-formed and growing network of **350+ active educators**. Also hosted on LinkedIn, this community fosters collaboration, resource-sharing, and ongoing professional development – amplifying classroom impact and reaching thousands of students worldwide.

Across both pathways, alumni stay actively involved as mentors, volunteers, and peer leaders – sharing resources, guiding new participants, and inspiring others – while strengthening an organic, participant-led global community.

Global STEM Alumni Peer Mentor Program

The **Alumni Peer Mentor Program** enables alumni to stay actively engaged while supporting current scholars, creating meaningful benefits for both groups. Alumni gain opportunities to strengthen their public speaking, facilitation, and feedback skills, while current participants receive peer mentorship that is contextually relevant, such as guidance shaped by shared experiences or specific cultural understanding. In 2025, **104** alumni served as program mentors, and **11** alumni received advanced training to become program facilitators. Mentors receive **experiential training** and work alongside professional AFS facilitators, creating a “pay-it-forward” model that helps alumni evolve from participants to leaders.

Alumni Leadership & Volunteer Service

Global STEM alumni are increasingly tapped as experts, leaders, speakers, and mentors – representing the alumni community at international events and panels, while sharing the unique experiences and insights that distinguish them. In 2025, alumni contributed across a wide range of AFS events worldwide:

- **Iker Landeros De La O (Mexico, Academies '19 & YA '23):** After mentoring for the 2025 Academies, Iker completed advanced facilitator certification and became a co-facilitator for the AFS Youth Assembly. Since July 2025, he has been consulting as a Digital Innovation & Web Development Intern for AFS while finishing his degree in Computational Science from Tecnológico de Monterrey. Iker demonstrates how alumni can adapt their program experiences into professional impact.
- **Mahboba Rezaie (Afghanistan/USA, Accelerators '24):** Mahboba served as a panelist on “Building Digital Sanctuaries: Fostering Safe Spaces for Online Learning” during AFS International Education Week. She relocated from Afghanistan to the USA to participate in the Yale Young Global Scholars Program, and was accepted to the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, where she will begin her studies in 2026. She continues to advocate for accessible education and digital safety for youth.
- **Rewan Elbebawy (Egypt, Accelerators '22 & YA '24) & Jana Saber (Egypt, Accelerators '23 & YA '24):** Rewan and Jana spoke at the inaugural AFS Regional Youth Assembly in Cairo, reflecting on their journey from scholars to mentors and facilitators. They highlighted the importance of amplifying youth voices in decision-making, and called for stronger intergenerational support.
- **Sanjiv Chanai (Trinidad & Tobago, Academies '23):** Sanjiv was selected to serve as a delegation leader for the AFS Youth Assembly in New York City, providing essential program support and mentorship. Back home, he serves as Executive Secretary of the Trinidad & Tobago Youth Advocacy Network, and coordinates service projects empowering youth collaboration across the region.
- **Joan Pamela Quartey (Ghana, Academies '21):** From Academies scholar to Global STEM Mentor to Vice President of AFS Ghana’s Accra Chapter, Joan exemplifies the spirit of AFS service and volunteerism. Selected to attend AFS’s Chapter Leadership Summit in Spain, she showcased how she applies the skills in changemaking she gained from her program to strengthen her local chapter. Joan continues to connect and inspire fellow changemakers throughout Ghana and beyond.
- **Ayşenaz Karabıyık (Türkiye, Accelerators '25):** Ayşenaz was a panelist for “Promoting Equity & Inclusion Through Virtual Exchange,” at the 8th Spectrum of Education conference in Istanbul, hosted by AFS Türkiye. She highlighted her Global STEM experience, and shared her *STEM for Girls* project, which she created to encourage young women to explore STEM through hands-on experiments and interactive learning.

“The Global STEM scholarship opened doors for me by giving me early exposure to leadership and problem-solving beyond the classroom. It influenced my academic and career path by helping me see that I can create change through collaboration and innovation. It also inspired my continued involvement with AFS through volunteering, leadership, and mentoring young people.”

- Joan Pamela Quartey (Ghana, Academies '21 & AFS Volunteer Chapter Leader)



bp Global Engagement

Touchpoints to bp's Business & Operations Worldwide

Global STEM scholars and alumni engage with bp across multiple national and global contexts: through mobility programs, virtual exchanges, special events, and the rapidly expanding Global STEM alumni network. These touchpoints create lasting impressions on scholars, their families, schools, peers, and host communities. Global STEM programs create **unique pathways to bp opportunities worldwide** and enable **meaningful impact across the STEM ecosystem**.

Mobility & Virtual Exchange Touchpoints

In person, dedicated “**bp Day**” **workshops** during the **Global STEM Academies** and **Global STEM Innovators** provide hands-on insight into bp careers and innovations – from engineering and data to renewables and biofuels – while highlighting bp's role in the evolving energy landscape. **2025 touchpoints included:**

- **bp America** – Houston, Texas, USA
- **bp Brazil** – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- **bp Egypt** – Cairo, Egypt
- **bp India** – Pune, India
- **bp Indonesia & Tangguh LNG** – Jakarta, Indonesia
- **bp UK & regional partners** – Aberdeen & Teesside, UK

At the **AFS Youth Assembly** in New York City, **Nadine McCrory, Head of Education & Employability**, addressed the **Climate Entrepreneurship Academy**, reaffirming bp's commitment to developing the talent and green skills needed for a just energy transition. **Kerry Dryburgh, EVP for People, Culture, and Communications**, contributed strategic insights on the Youth Assembly's Global Leadership Council.

bp further extends its impact through the **virtual exchange programs**, offering leadership perspectives and professional development tailored to regional and global contexts. During the **Global STEM Educators** debrief, **Maxine Cleminson** reinforced bp's commitment to global education, emphasizing the importance of equipping young people with both technical skills and global citizenship values.

“STEM skills paired with global citizenship values are essential for the future. At bp, we're committed to helping young people build skills to tackle global challenges.”

- **Maxine Cleminson**, Education & Outreach Programmes Consultant, bp

bp Early Careers & Employability Mentorship Program

In 2025, bp and AFS launched a **mentorship program connecting 22 alumni with 20 bp employees from Early Careers Graduate and Apprenticeship programs** across **15 countries**: Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, and the United States. Participants met twice monthly from February to June in 20 mentor-mentee pairs, contributing **200+ mentoring hours across 160 sessions**. The program provided guidance on employability skills, resume-building, interview preparation, and insight into the energy sector, while fostering leadership development and cross-cultural exchange for mentors.

Alumni Professional Development

bp supports the Global STEM alumni network by providing mentorship and guidance on Early Careers programs, apprenticeships, and graduate roles in 15+ countries. In 2025, two virtual **career-readiness** events connected alumni with professionals across various practice areas:

- **Speed Networking: 57 alumni** connected with **12 bp professionals** in digital, commercial, and technical roles to boost confidence and further explore career pathways. **Business areas engaged** included **Technology** (Digital Workplace, Asset Management, Software & Platform Engineering, Commercialisation); **Customer & Products** (Castrol, Mobility & Convenience); **Gas & Low Carbon** (Offshore Wind, Hydrogen, Strategic Corporates & Partnerships); **Finance & Digital Solutions**; and **Production & Operations** (Projects, Subsurface).
- **Building Resilience and Adapting to Change:** Led by bp faculty Chris Campbell, this session gathered **25 alumni** to strengthen workplace skills and gain insight into bp's organizational culture.

Outcomes: **100%** of alumni reported improved communication skills, and **83%** reported measurable gains in goal-setting, workplace readiness, and increased motivation to pursue energy-sector careers.

Education & Employability Team

The strategic partnership with **bp's Education & Employability team** is a key driver of the Global STEM programs' impact. Throughout the year, the team supports alumni engagement, promotes program opportunities, and connects colleagues across regions to expand awareness and participation. Together, these efforts advance core goals of the Initiative: empowering future talent through education and skill-building, while aligning impact with evolving needs for energy and the climate. **AFS gratefully acknowledges the contributions of:**

- **Kerry Dryburgh**, EVP for People, Culture, and Communications
- **Nadine McCrory**, Head of Education & Employability
- **Maxine Cleminson**, Education & Outreach Programmes Consultant
- **Simone Hinds-Addow**, Education & Employability Senior Advisor
- **Georgia Baker**, Education & Employability Advisor
- **Amanda Eller**, Education & Employability Senior Advisor
- **Natalie Gutierrez**, Education & Employability Program Coordinator

AFS also extends deep gratitude to **Kathleen Martinez**, former Education & Employability Senior Manager, whose vision has been instrumental to the Global STEM programs' foundation and success.



Acknowledgments & Thanks

The AFS Global STEM Changemakers Initiative is possible thanks to **generous funding from bp** and the dedicated support of **AFS staff and volunteers worldwide**, virtually and on the ground. The following AFS Network Organizations and affiliates are especially recognized for their contributions in 2025:

- AFS Brazil
- AFS China
- AFS Egypt
- AFS Hungary
- AFS India
- AFS Indonesia
- AFS Japan
- AFS Malaysia
- AFS Mexico
- AFS New Zealand
- AFS South Africa
- AFS Spain
- AFS-USA
- AFS Wales / Celtic English Academy
- Friends of AFS in Australia (FAFSA)
- Value Learning

Knowledge Partners

AFS extends gratitude to our esteemed partners for enhancing program operations and outreach, especially: **University of Pennsylvania Center for Social Impact Strategy, New York University SPS Center for Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame GC-DWC, SPARK, Girls Toward Leadership, and Teach For All.**

AFS International Team

AFS acknowledges key team members for their leadership and direct contributions to the Initiative in 2025:

- **Daniel Obst**, President & CEO
- **Efrem Fisher**, Chief Programs Officer
- **Sean Reilly**, Program Director
- **Saskia Kaya**, Program Manager
- **Facundo Méndez**, Program Specialist
- **Iker Landeros De La O**, Consultant, Digital Innovation & Web Development
- **Federico Larriera**, Branding & Design Specialist
- **Ana Carolina Cassiano**, Consultant, Global Education Strategy & Impact
- **Dylan Peterson**, Educator & School Global Engagement Manager
- **Molly Stern**, Manager, Global Up
- **Brian Bright Musyoki**, Training Operations & Facilitation Coordinator
- **Martha Rivas**, Finance Coordinator
- **Veronica Conti**, Marketing Consultant

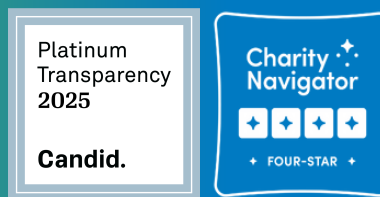


AFS is an international, voluntary, non-governmental, nonprofit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world.

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