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**STRATEGIC PLANNING 2007 – 2012**  
**AFS INTERCULTURAL PROGRAMS INDIA**

*New Delhi, March, 2007*



# AFS INDIA STRATEGIC PLANNING 2007 – 2012

## I. BACKGROUND

After a hiatus of nearly 30 years, AFS returned to India in 2005 by sending a group of 35 students to USA on the YES Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and Culture, 2 to Switzerland, 1 to Italy and 2 to Norway. Over 120 students applied from 15 different schools in three cities of India (Pune, Ahmedabad, Delhi). In year 2006 AFS India sent 36 students to USA, 3 to Japan, 1 to Hong Kong, 2 to Switzerland and 1 to Italy; in year 2008 AFS India is sending 41 students to USA, 3 to Japan, 2 to Switzerland, 1 to Germany and 1 to Brazil.

AFS India, with parent volunteers from six cities is organizing and planning for the 2008-9 cycle in order to continue with the sending program to various countries and also to host in the future on the community service program. AFS India has adopted the AFS network mission statement as well as its core values and after revising the goals and strategic drivers of the Network, AFS India have prepared the present strategic planning for the following 5 years.

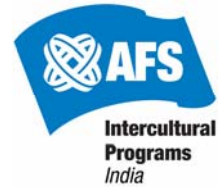
### a. The AFS Mission Statement

AFS 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.

#### *The Core Values and Attributes of AFS*

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

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



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

## **b. Principles**

In AFS India we believe that intercultural learning is about the whole person, as Asha Kamath (India to USA, 1967) states,

“The AFS program helped me develop into a wholesome personality. I was a very shy girl from a small town in South India; today I am a global citizen thanks to my ability to deal and interact with all kinds of people. This would not have been possible if I was not exposed to the idea and ideals of such a multifaceted program which helped me develop my overall character and personality”

Most participants that go on our exchange programs undergo many challenging transitions to a new cultural context; a second language; a very different academic environment and therefore, AFS has an important role to play in helping participants make these transitions across cultures by serving as a cultural bridge for these students.

Understanding culture and its importance in human interaction and communication; being sensitive to persons who are culturally different; recognizing that culturally different persons have their own values and beliefs; and understanding that persons from other cultures may be experiencing the challenges of cultural adjustment, are issues related to cultural awareness that AFS India will take into consideration when running programs.

AFS India will reinforce cultural self-awareness, having students reflect on their own cultural identity, recognize their own cultural values, and consider how these might play out in another culture or a culturally diverse environment. Cultural self-awareness is clearly one of the learning goals to take into consideration when running programs at AFS.

AFS India will promote openness to other ways of thinking and to cultural differences as well as empathy, defined as the capacity to view experience in the manner of the other, ‘people-skills’ necessary for working, communicating and interacting with persons from other cultures and will promote the ability to negotiate differences by understanding more than one cultural context and also by being self-reflective and being flexible and adaptable to new cultural circumstances and persons.

## **II. GOALS OVERVIEW FOR AFS INDIA (2007-2012)**

### **1. A leader in intercultural education**

AFS India, by the end of year 2007 would have defined desired educational results and learning indicators for participants (e.g. sojourners, families, schools and other local organizations); that way, by 2008-9 will start monitoring both the short-term educational outcomes and life-long impact of the AFS experience on national and foreign participants, thus clarifying how the educational results are achieved in each program and strengthen the appropriate learning processes.

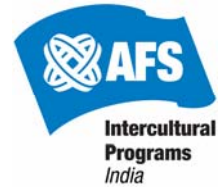
After year 2008, AFS India will start doing research on different educational areas regarding intercultural exchanges – involving ex participants and current participants – with the cooperation of universities in the field of intercultural education.

AFS India, by 2012 will be cooperating more closely with the formal and/or informal educational sector at the local, national and regional level in order to enhance educational impact, to improve its intercultural programs and to receive recognition for our contribution to intercultural education.

AFS India will also seek to help uplift the disadvantaged minorities and groups within India, for whom educational opportunities and learning skills are not often easily accessible. This would contribute to bring on parity different sections of the society, especially those who may never have an opportunity to undertake such a mind-opening experience. AFS India would seek the active participation of other like-minded organizations, NGO's and the government.

### **2. Identity and Visibility**

Since AFS India is a new organization in India despite the fact that it has been doing exchanges in the sixties and seventies, first there will be a priority on settling down with strong operational and governance systems as well as a good volunteer base. In this sense, AFS India will be getting to know the local market for intercultural education and defining a more accurate strategy for the following years.



AFS India will focus in the first three years on promoting AFS core values among its volunteers, participants and related people (school principals, parents, NGO's directors, etc.), by developing sustainable relationships that will benefit AFS and enable AFS to enhance its visibility and promote its mission.

It is by year 2009, that AFS India will look forward to a more open visibility among the institutions related to education by having a more active role within the community and government on intercultural education.

### **3. Diversity**

AFS over the world takes diversity seriously and ensures its operating culture and policies are inclusive. Diversity, for AFS India, will be one of the major challenges taking into consideration that India as a country it is considered one of the most diverse, having many different cultures, 15 major languages, over 150 different dialects spoken, over 30 different religions, more than 1000 castes and sub castes.

AFS India will take into consideration the inclusiveness of all the above mentioned by putting in place processes that are flexible and adjustable to the needs for diversity among applicants from all over the country.

The finding of scholarships it is very important to increase diversity, it will constitute a priority starting 2008 once all operational systems are well in place and we are ready to focus on external activities.

India will be regionalized and will target different communities in each region; also will seek cooperation among other organizations that can help us to encompass diversity and may also broaden the volunteer and participant base.

### **4. Program Development**

For year 2007-8, AFS India will focus on two basic programs: school year program for sending Indian students abroad on Northern Hemisphere basically; and community



service program for hosting from both hemispheres. Additionally, it will conduct a pilot program for university students coming from abroad for the Hosting Program.

Once the systems are firmly in place for both programs, and AFS India can count on the necessary resources to maintain a good quality on the programs, it will seek to establish more innovative programs that may be related to India's projection to the world on technology and spirituality.

## **5. Organizational Development**

This year, as well as next year, AFS India will continue inviting many individuals to be part of AFS as volunteers in order to create Local Chapters and allocating sustainable resources to train volunteers and promote a common set of operating values:

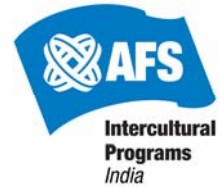
- Committed to the core values and mission of AFS
- Supportive of participants' welfare, starting with the most vulnerable
- Respectful of others, their roles and responsibilities
- Accountable for high quality and integrity
- Efficient in achieving results
- Professional in our behavior
- Innovative in learning from experience

During the coming years, AFS India will focus on organizing workshops to the volunteers and staff for developing an organizational culture that values learning from different identity groups, that encourages openness, transparency, accountability, and that supports constructive conflict resolution.

There will be a code of ethics, to complement the operating values, which establishes the behavioral boundaries that staff and volunteers know and adhere to; also will develop a function manual to clarify the responsibilities and competencies for each volunteer and staff role.

## **6. Financial Health**

AFS India will emphasize the increasing number of participants on its Sending Programs and by starting the community service program for hosting on 2007, with a view to generating



more revenues seeking the financial breakeven by 2008.

It will be important from start, to consider maximizing the cost effectiveness of all operations, as well as the seeking of additional sources of revenue, such as donations from national corporations or providing intercultural courses for a fee.

AFS India will be financially independent by 2010 and will then start to consolidate by building reserves.

## **7. Governance**

By end 2007, AFS will have a constituted board with national members, representatives of different communities within the country, considering the vast diversity that India has as a country. By then, AFS India will promote a clear understanding of the distinctive roles of governance and management in line with "the policy governance model," and take the steps necessary to implement this approach with the proper training and assistance of AFS International and Partners.

### III. KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

After doing a thoughtful analysis of AFS India current situation, described in the following pages; there have been determined three key main issues that will constitute a priority within the first couple of years in order to maximize the success rate: Create a well train volunteer base with a solid management (Board and National Office) and both together develop a positive identity and reputation.

*AFS India has to focus on setting up good and solid Management systems as well as a good leadership.* Due to the complexity of India as a country (cultural diversity, vast extensions, diverse ideologies) AFS India will need a very strong management system that can cope with volume and at the same time take into consideration specific characteristics from diverse social groups.

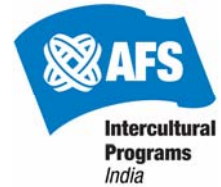
As AFS is just starting with 6 local chapters and a national office, leadership presence will be essential in all places to encourage AFS values, assure the system implementations and have a well coordinated work process in place.

Indians willing to do volunteering, will want to know from the beginning who are the leaders of AFS in India, what could they do as volunteers and when they do the job?, AFS India will need a good system in place, so volunteers can be well in tune with AFS operations and in time be pleased to assist as volunteers.

*AFS India will need to have a sensitive approach while building volunteer chapters.* The volunteer base is the most important asset while running programs (Sending and Hosting) and for carrying the ideals of AFS further.

AFS India will study and create locally acceptable systems and strategies which will enhance the activities and results of Local Chapters. The approach should be a more collective oriented or inclusive to people when implementing systems and building local chapters.

*AFS India has to develop a good strategy for building a solid market reputation.* In India, reputation is a very important value, on an individual, business and the institutional level.



AFS India's reputation will be built in large parts by its policies, staff, actions, volunteers, participants and all related entities.

Having consistency between what is said and what is done during all activities requires a good management system with a good leadership, sensitive to the volunteers' perceptions and capable of acting quickly to amend any adverse image of AFS.

Volunteers are to be considered the front office when interested people approach AFS for gathering information. Then, it will be very important to have well trained and organized volunteer local chapters that will communicate the desired values and goals.

These main issues are summarized in the following chart by including the program's perspective:

Internal Process Perspective		External Perspective	
1	Establish a Solid Management and Leadership	1	Build a solid market reputation within India
2	Build the volunteer base with a sensitive approach	2	Build a reputation of stability and good performance internationally
Program Perspective (Processes)		Program Perspective (Clients)	
1	Full implementation of school program processes	1	Achieve high performance on AFS quality standards
2	Full implementation of community service program processes	2	Maintain a high level of satisfaction among volunteers

## IV. Follow up Indicators

In order to maintain a close follow up on the Strategic goals and the main areas that will lead AFS India into success, a set of indicators have been defined. These indicators have been created as a starting point and they may be subject to modifications during the following years according to the institution's needs and new perspectives acquired.

The following goals and indicators are focused to a short term period to evaluate the achievements by April of 2008 and make the necessary adjustments after doing a new analysis of the Strategic Plan and AFS India's status.

GOALS		INDICATORS	MEASURABLE RESULTS			
			EXTRAORDINARY	DESIRED	NOT GOOD	
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>National Board fully operational</b>	1.1	Indian volunteers as well as External Indian board members by End 2007	5 to 7	3 to 5	1 or 2
		1.2	Board members received training on Policy Governance by mid 2008	3 times	Twice	once
		1.3	B. M. reviewed and improved the Strategic Planning	Before mid 07	Before end 2007	After end 2007
		1.4	B. M. have reviewed and follows Policies approved.	Before end 07	Before mid 2008	After end 2008
		1.5	B. M. have participated in LC board elections	100%	50%	0% to 50%
	<b>National Director in place</b>	2.1	B. M. have selected National Director	Before end 2007	Apr-08	After mid 2008
		2.2	N. D. have been trained	All issues	Key issues	Basic issues
	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	3.1	Developed all rules and instructions for the AGM activities	Before mid 07	By August 2007	Before mid 2008
		3.2	Conduct an AGM with the National Board	Before mid 07	By September 2007	Before mid 2008
	<b>Local Chapters in place</b>	4.1	L. C. Election conducted by June 2007	All 6 LCs	1 to 2	one
		4.2	L. C. Meetings regularly	Monthly All	Monthly 3-4	1-2 Monthly.
		4.3	Open New Local Chapters	8 to 10 LCs	5 to 7 LCs	1 to 4 LCs
	<b>Education</b>	5.1	Perform evaluations in all intercultural workshops regarding Programs	Desired plus elearning evaluations	All Orientations and CSE	Some orientations
		5.2	Create a research topic on interculture with relevance at the university level	Research in Progress	Research proposal created	No research proposal
	<b>Uplift the Disadvantaged</b>	6.1	Offer intercultural learning opportunities to the Indian Society considering the disadvantaged	Creation of Special Program to reach Disadvantaged students	Maintain balanced social ratio w/criteria	No criteria Defined, no Consideration

The National Board as well as the management are considered a key success factor and therefore, both need to be well established by next year in order to proceed with major challenges until 2012.

Even though, AFS India is starting it's activities and during the first two years will be focusing in the volunteer development and program processes, will devote some efforts towards creating educational materials in the interculture field and will seek to organize a research in the field of Interculture involving one or more universities.

In the following chart are described the goals to build a solid volunteer base and create Local Chapters. During the first year, will be defined a volunteer concept for AFS India based on AFS values using AFS experience from other countries.

	GOALS	INDICATORS	MEASURABLE RESULTS			
			EXTRAORDINARY	DESIRED	NOT GOOD	
Volunteer Base	Train Volunteers	5.2	Training kit developed for all key Volunteer roles	All roles	Key roles	basic roles
		5.3	Trained all Local Chapters in all key volunteer roles	All volunteers in all LCs	All LCs	Some LCs
	Vol. Development Process	6.1	Have implemented a Vol. Devel. Process in Local Chapters	All LCs	Most active LCs (2-3)	1 or 2 LCs
		6.2	Implemented a volunteer support & follow up system	Fully Operational	Partially Implemented	Created but not implemented
		6.3	Increased number of volunteers per Local Chapter	30 to 40	20 to 30	Same as 2006
	Volunteer Activities	7.1	Bi-monthly National newsletter in circulation	Monthly	Bi-monthly	Started but not continuously.
		7.2	Developed 7 activities on each Local Chapter	All LCs	Most active LCs (2-3)	1 or 2 LCs

Volunteers are being involved since the beginning in the strategic planning with the National Board and by 2008 with the volunteers at a national level thru the Annual General Meeting.

Volunteer at local chapters will receive trainings and will be organizing activities and giving support to the programs. In the following Chart a set of basic indicators have been define to monitor the Program's perspective:

	GOALS	INDICATORS	MEASURABLE RESULTS			
			EXTRAORDINARY	DESIRED	NOT GOOD	
Programs	Program numbers	8.1	Increased sending destination countries	15	10	same as 2006
		8.2	Increased sending participants per LC	20-25	15-20	same as 2006
		8.3	Increased hosting participants per LC	15 to 20	10 to 15 by NH08-09	same as 2006
		8.4	Increased the YES Program numbers	50	45	40
	Program Quality	9.1	Standardized all program activities	With KPIs/activity	All standardized	Basic description
		9.2	cs, un and sc programs in place	All LCs	1-2 LCs per program	One program not implemented
		9.3	Define the most important key indicator for monitoring Programs	Implemented Balance Score Card System	Main Processes	Not done for any process

AFS India will seek for transparency and excellence in its program processes and finances by keeping an organized methodology like ISO 9001:2000.

Also, a set of financial indicator have been defined to monitor the increase of scholarships available, maintaining a healthy economy within the institution and seeking for a financial independence from the YES Program.

	GOALS	INDICATORS	MEASURABLE RESULTS		
			EXTRAORDINARY	DESIRED	NOT GOOD
<b>Finances</b>	<b>Income</b>	10.1 Fundraising plan in execution	Partial results	In place and some activities developed.	Created but not in implementation
		10.2 Increased number of Scholarships	20%	10%	Same as 2006
		10.3 Reduced direct dependence on YES funds	By 50%	By 30%	Same as 2006
		10.4 Funds generated at LC level	All LCs	3-4 LCs	1-2 LCs
	<b>Costs</b>	11.1 Finalize the 2007 year with a positive balance in the Budget	Positive Balance	Break even	Negative
		11.2 Increased efficiency in Process activities	Improved percentage ratios compared to 2006		

These goals have been analyzed and defined by the Board members of AFS India and used as a reference the Strategic Planning created in 2006 and modified to its actual version; Also, it has been used the analysis on the Strengths and Opportunities, Weaknesses and Opportunities to determine the plans to be executed in AFS India starting year 2007 (See Exhibit A). Furthermore, a consistency test between the planning and the SWOT analysis has been made to assure coverage of all concerns by the people involved in the creation of this strategic planning for AFS India. The Critical success factors have been also defined after the analysis.