



global competence certificate



**A Decade of
Global Competence
Development**



**IMPACT
REPORT
2015-2025**

global competence certificate

“We envision dramatically scaling our impact by embracing virtual learning and adaptable program models, meeting learners wherever they are to cultivate global competence and vital understanding worldwide.”

LINDA STUART

Head of the Global Competence Certificate
Director of Global Education Innovation
AFS Intercultural Programs



The AFS Global Competence Certificate (GCC) is an award-winning virtual program for professionals, faculty and students to develop tangible global skills essential to live, work, and make a real social impact around the world.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The Global Competence Certificate consists of **eleven Educational Goals** in the following four-phase developmental framework:



The **AFS Framework for Active Global Citizens**, launched in 2024, reaffirms this GCC educational foundation and builds upon our long standing intercultural expertise.

ABOUT AFS

AFS Intercultural Programs 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.



AFS operates a variety of programs: high school study abroad and exchanges for young adults, virtual exchanges, host family programs, volunteer and teacher programs, trainings and events including the AFS Youth Assembly.

The vision of AFS is to ensure a more peaceful, just, equitable and sustainable future by creating more Active Global Citizens: people whose informed, compassionate, and ethical compass drives them to lead lives and make decisions that contribute to a better world. Find out more at afs.org



AFS Youth Assembly, Climate Entrepreneurship Academy Global Up Certificate Earners, New York City, 2024 - Photo by Jhonny Vaccar



Ten years ago, AFS launched the Global Competence Certificate (GCC) with a bold vision: to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to navigate an interconnected and rapidly changing world.

Today, as we mark the 10th anniversary of the GCC, its impact is undeniable. Across industries, communities, and cultures, GCC alumni are fostering mutual understanding, bridging divides, and driving positive change. In an era where global challenges demand global solutions, the need for intercultural competence has never been greater. This report reflects on a decade of transformative learning and the enduring power of global competence in shaping a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

Join us in celebrating
a Decade of Global Competence!

In partnership,



Daniel Obst

President & CEO
AFS Intercultural Programs



The Global Competence Certificate now finds itself at the core of all AFS Educational Digital Learning programs ensuring that AFS makes a strategic and significant contribution to the development of active global citizens.

Virtual learning and exchange is a timely endeavor for the next decade's commitment to achieving peace, justice and understanding.

A special acknowledgement to our key partners at the Sir Cyril Taylor Foundation, Education New Zealand, Global Cities and the Stevens Initiative and many more for joining us to transform lives and make a meaningful difference. I am confident our educational foundation is strengthened by these partnerships and positions us for a future filled with growth, innovation, and continued success.

Here's to the next decade and beyond!

In gratitude,



Linda Stuart

Director of Global Education Innovation
AFS Intercultural Programs

2015
2025

A DECADE OF IMPACT AT A GLANCE

The combination of solid intercultural theory coupled with validated experiential learning practices has positioned the AFS GCC as the signature digital education certificate program. The GCC is at the core of every offering - from the Student Learning Journey, to Foundations for Volunteers to Global You Adventurer, Global You Changemaker, the Global STEM & Educator Academies and all six versions of the Global Up affirming its strategic importance in developing global competence and Active Global Citizens worldwide. *Our scope, our depth and our transformation has truly just begun.*



40,000+

LEARNERS HAVE PARTICIPATED in the Global Competence Certificate through AFS or its partner organizations.

94%

OF GLOBAL UP EDUCATOR LEARNERS are highly likely to recommend the program to their colleagues or friends.

500+

HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY AND STAFF have trained to bring Global Up programs to their institutions.



1,000+

AFS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS have trained as Qualified Facilitators to deliver global competence learning for diverse audiences

125+

COUNTRIES represent the diverse global origins of our learners.

60+

AFS NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & GLOBAL AFFILIATES have used the Global Competence certificate as part of local and regional initiatives.



12

STUDIES, including research and assessments, validate the effectiveness of the Global Competence Certificate to develop global competencies.

3,400+

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT VIRTUAL CLASSROOM EXCHANGES were conducted, expanding intercultural learning for youth worldwide.



GCC: A TIMELINE OF TRANSFORMATIONS

Global Up Americas begins a two-year virtual exchange commitment to connect 3,000 high school students in classrooms across Colombia, Mexico and the USA. The **AFS Youth Assembly Academy** participants also develop through the GCC.

The Global Competence Certificate is widely used in all continents through the AFS network. A community of over **1,500 Qualified Facilitators** worldwide are equipped to deliver the program to others.

Global Up suite expands to meet additional audiences through new versions: Educator, At Work, Teen; GCC is finalist for the PIONEER Award of the year; Global Cities partners on research.

GCC becomes the foundation of the "Global Up" suite. Global Up At Home is developed providing access to global competence learning beyond mobility, in local and domestic environments.

Special Edition GCC for 8,000+ repatriated AFS mobility students impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.

100+ new Qualified Facilitators were trained. AFS Network Organizations in Chile, Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Belgium Flanders adopt external offerings model.

EBICL development team
New York City, July 2014



2023

2024



2022

2021

2020

2019

2025 and beyond

Over 100 Higher Education institutions have utilized the GCC; Virtual Exchange becomes a core offering to meet the AFS goal to expand and scale access to intercultural learning opportunities.

External validating research by Purdue University. Findings show students grew 8+ points as measured by the IDI.

GCC becomes available in ten languages: English, Spanish, German, French, Port, Bahasa, Dutch, Turkish, Chinese, Japanese.

First external licensees adopt GCC (Purdue University (CILMAR) in the USA, Tomas Moore in Belgium, BINUS in Indonesia) Adoption of a new LMS to meet **industry standards of accessibility** (WCAG).

GCC for AFS 18+ mobility participants formalized by Sentio as the required educational accompaniment for study/teach/volunteer abroad, later renamed *GCC Abroad*.

Inaugural pilot group (MIAC) to Japan: **150 students** enrolled in LMS to take intercultural learning program.

EBICL (Experiential Based Intercultural Learning) commissioned by AFS INT President Vincenzo Morlini met in New York City, USA, to develop a new blended learning program for mobility participants.

2018

2017

2016

2015

2014-15

PARTNERSHIPS AMPLIFYING OUR REACH

Global Up programs have empowered thousands of students, educators, and professionals across a variety of disciplines from around the world with global skills like critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and open-mindedness.

WE HONOR OUR LONG-STANDING PARTNERS

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GLOBAL EDUCATION
AND EXPERIENCE

The Hormel Institute
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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The Power of
International
Education

THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

CLEMSON
UNIVERSITY

FAIRLEIGH
DICKINSON
UNIVERSITY

University
of Dayton

Celtic
English
Academy

P PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF
St. Thomas

Saint Mary's
College
NOTRE DAME, IN

Fox Valley
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
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Fontys

VALUE
LEARNING
INTERCULTURAL SPECIALISTS

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UNIVERSITY

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UNIVERSITY

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY
GLOBAL

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Central
Oklahoma

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Program

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CONNECTING EDUCATORS. EMPOWERING STUDENTS.

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COLLEGE

Norwich Study Centre
FLYING CLASSROOMS

Ohio Living
FAITH • COMPASSION • COMMUNITY

AfricanImpact

WEST VIRGINIA
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Cowen Institute
TULANE UNIVERSITY

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Nuvance
Health

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW ORLEANS

Cultural Vistas

Moise IS

aipc pandora

ioj

"My group who went abroad had impressive quantitative and qualitative results in terms of intercultural development. Both the IDI and the qualitative data showed that the group had a shift from a predominantly monocultural mindset to a more intercultural (global) mindset. Given these results and considering learners' feedback about the program, I highly recommend the GCC."

H. Parker, PhD
Purdue University

"The GCC asks learners to follow a different path, practicing core global competencies that allow them to interact more effectively with culturally different others.

Kudos for offering a certificate program that prepares people to live and flourish in an increasingly diverse and complex world."

Michael Vande Berg, PhD
Award-winning researcher
and interculturalist

"As well as helping to develop the global citizens of tomorrow, this programme demonstrates the reciprocal benefits of international education, giving our rangatahi a chance to learn with high school students from around the world, and giving their offshore peers a chance to learn 'with' New Zealand and our unique way of thinking."

Grant McPherson
Former Education New Zealand
Chief Executive Officer

RESEARCH FINDINGS AT THE CORE OF OUR PROGRAM

We measure and demonstrate the educational impact of our programs and offers in developing active global citizens through ongoing assessment and dedicated research.

➤ Stevens Initiative

Two recent AFS studies, funded by the Stevens Initiative, show that virtual exchanges significantly boost global competence in youth. The initial 2021 study evidenced that students completing the GCC grew three times more than peers without intentional intercultural education. The results from the 2023 study involving 250 teens from Australia, India, Indonesia, and China, showed notable gains in 'world orientation' and 'interpersonal engagement,' key dimensions supporting the value of virtual exchanges.

The Stevens Initiative, a program of the Aspen Institute, supported by the Bezos Family Foundation and the governments of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates.

➤ Purdue University

Various Purdue University studies found that students who received group mentoring through the AFS Global Competence Certificate (GCC) during study abroad significantly improved their intercultural competence. The research shows intercultural learning requires structured guidance. The GCC, blending online learning and group mentorship is a cost-effective and scalable approach. Results from the studies evidenced students gaining 8 to 13+ points on the IDI, statistically significant growth, showing broad potential.

➤ Global Cities

Between 2022-2024, AFS partnered with Global Cities, a Bloomberg Philanthropies project, to measure student global competence using the innovative *Codebook for Global Student Learning Outcomes*. The study reviewed and coded 1652 student posts in the AFS Global You and Global Up curricula. The results demonstrated clear student global competence gain as evidenced by greater prevalence of the Cultural Understanding and Appreciation for Diversity indicators embedded in the programs' design.



The Global Up team provides thought leadership at global conferences annually including:

AAHLE, AIEA, APAIE, CIEE, Diversity Abroad, EAIE, Forum on Education Abroad, GIC, IIE, IVEC, Languages Canada, NAFSA, National Service Training Conference, NZIEC, WISE Conference NC, WISE Initiative Qatar, World Council on Intercultural & Global Competence

SPECIAL COLLABORATIONS



bp partnered with AFS for a 5 year initiative (2021-2026) aimed to provide over 5,000 young people worldwide with immersive learning experiences through STEM, global competence, and sustainability-focused intercultural virtual exchange programs. The GCC is a core component of this initiative, giving young people the knowledge, skills and behaviors to help build a more sustainable future.



Thanks to The Cyril Taylor Charitable Foundation, 300+ teachers receive full scholarships annually for the AFS Effect+ in the Classroom and take part in the Global Up Educator program. AFS developed the Effect+ Virtual Program to help teachers and students develop global citizenship skills and learn about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Between 2020 and 2023, AFS and Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao delivered the Global Competence Certificate (GCC) to 1,400 New Zealanders and partners. Initially a Covid-19 solution, it later supported study abroad experiences. In 2022, the partnership was recognized globally for excellence in public-private collaboration.



The Stevens Initiative, housed in the Aspen Institute and funded by Bezos Family Foundation is the sponsor of Global Up Americas, a unique VE that harnesses the GCC and connects young people and educators in the Americas, developing them as active leaders through virtual classroom learning experience with live facilitated dialogue sessions.

THE GLOBAL UP SUITE

A VERSION FOR EVERY NEED

Global Up empowers learners with the essential skills to live, work and make a positive social impact in diverse settings. Now available in six distinct digital education programs, each version provides a refined intercultural learning experience: *Abroad*, *Inbound*, *At Home*, *At Work*, *Educator* and *Teen*.

Our partners value the GCC because it is **field-tested**, **research based**, **affordable**, **scalable**, **innovative & customizable**, **facilitated**, **flexible** and **easy to use**. Each program features engaging online modules, peer discussion forums, guided reflection with qualified facilitators, downloadable handbooks, implementation support, customization possibilities, multiple languages and a certificate with digital credentials upon completion, ensuring a version adaptable to any learner.



"The Global Up program was everything I could ask for from a learning experience, full of new insights and concrete lessons I look forward to passing on and implementing everyday."

Anna, University student,
The Netherlands

➤ Explore more at
www.globalup.com

➤ Contact us
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GLOBAL COMPETENCE CERTIFICATE TEAM



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