The Experience of AFS: Outbound Student Mobility and the Australian Schools Sector

- Aasha Murthy
- Kirrilee Hughes

The Schools Sector: The Poor Cousin in Outbound Mobility?

- Discussions focused primarily on post-secondary sectors - Australian university, TAFE and vocational education students
- These sectors attract the majority of public debate and media attention AND the lion’s share of government funding
- The secondary sector - the feeder schools for Australia’s universities and TAFEs - is normally overlooked and undervalued
“Although international education takes many forms such as study tours, teacher and student exchanges, LOTE and other curriculum content, at the national level only the fee paying international student aspect is well documented; overall policy coherence has yet to be achieved”


Focus Questions

➢ Why is the schools sector important for outbound mobility discussions in Australia?

➢ How does outbound mobility in the schools sector interact with outbound mobility in the tertiary sector?

➢ What outbound mobility lessons can we learn from the experience of the schools sector in general and from AFS in particular?
HISTORY

• Over 60 years worldwide in student exchange
• Operating in Australia for over 50 years
• Over 15000 participants annually across 51 countries
• Forged from the crucible of World Wars I & II
• Changing the world ‘one person at a time’ through knowledge and understanding of different cultures.....

Why is the Schools Sector Important for Outbound Mobility Discussions?

AFS Long Term Impact Study (October, 2008)

AFS Participants are:

➢ 20% more likely than their peers to speak and use at least one foreign language
➢ One third of AFS participants also studied abroad at the university level
➢ Go on to attain a higher level of education than their peers
➢ Are significantly more likely than their peers to seek a career that involves working extensively with other cultures
➢ Compared to their peers, twice as many AFS participants have lived abroad for at least one year due to their own or their spouse’s work or professional activity
Why is the Schools Sector Important for Outbound Mobility Discussions?

- Outbound mobility in the schools sector is a catalyst for outbound mobility in the tertiary sector → those students who participate in an exchange are more likely to participate in an exchange at the University level.

- Furthermore, secondary students who participate in an exchange program are more likely to proceed to higher education and to study to a higher level (Masters or PhD).

Interaction between Secondary and Tertiary Outbound Mobility

If students who participate in secondary school exchange programs are a catalyst for outbound mobility in the tertiary sector, what’s happening in the schools sector that is impacting the tertiary sector?

- Decline in participation rates in student exchange programs.
- Decline in LOTE participation rates.
AFS Australia
The Way Forward......

Intercultural Learning and the Development of Global Communities

Insights & Implications

Focus Groups
Market Research
Competitor Activity
Key Drivers

Sending  Hosting

- Gap year dynamics
- Attractiveness of Australia
- Reciprocity
- Distance & Cost of travel
- Global Economic Slowdown
- Currency Fluctuations
- Shift in target age group 18+
- Increased demand for short programs
- Greater interest in volunteering programs
- Volunteer numbers and activity
- Decrease in Host family numbers

Our Core Proposition

To provide the gateway to A Journey of Self-Discovery through Awareness & Appreciation of People, Places & Practices

Find yourself with AFS
Our Values

• Dignity

• Respect for differences

• Harmony

• Sensitivity

• Tolerance

Our Approach

• Market Facing

• Customer Focused

• Volunteer Driven

• Financially Stable
Our Uniqueness

**DRIVERS**
- Widest portfolio of programs
- Global Network
- AFS Community
- Scholarships

**ENABLERS**
- Technology initiatives
- Quality Support Mechanisms
- Strategic Alliances & Coalitions
- Innovative Promotions

**Australian International Education Conference 2009**
www.aiec.idp.com
Summary

- Outbound school student mobility triggers outbound tertiary student mobility.

- Insights into students' perceptions and perspectives at the secondary school level can influence policy and program development to drive ongoing interest in outbound mobility programs.

- A variety of program options – content, duration, timing and geography – are required to address changing needs of young people in Australia and across the world.

Australian International Education Conference 2009
www.aiec.idp.com