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ABSTRACT

Study findings showed that living with a new family in a foreign country has a major and direct impact on the quality of young people's relationships with parents, siblings, and friends. A sample of 300 recently returned AFS students were surveyed; 173 students completed questionnaires. The returned students assessed their communication with their parents as being significantly higher in frequency and in quality than their communication with siblings and friends. Regarding changes that may have occurred in relationships since their departure for their homestay abroad, students revealed that relationships with friends changed more negatively than relationships with siblings or parents. One fifth of relationships with friends were described as deteriorating a great deal. In contrast, only 2 percent of parent relationships and only 1 percent of sibling relationships were described in this way. Romantic attachments are especially prone to deterioration. In the cases of both romances and other friendships, the underlying cause of negative changes was often identified as the comparatively rapid maturation and increase in knowledge on the part of the returned AFS student.
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INTRODUCTION

First, a happy announcement: Associate Editor Bettina Hansel has just been awarded her Ph.D. by Syracuse University. Her dissertation was based on AFS's Impact Study, a seven-year project involving some 2500 young people that sought to answer this question: Do secondary school students who have a homestay abroad develop and mature in positive ways more rapidly than similar students who have no such experience? The answer: Yes. AFS International has just published a six-page summary statement of the Impact Study that conveys our basic findings in layperson's terms. A longer discussion of the findings appeared in the Spring 1985 issue of *The Journal of College Admissions*. If you would like to receive a copy of either of these, write to us at the address on the inside of the back cover.

The article in this number of the *Occasional Papers* also concerns the impact of an intercultural homestay on secondary school students, and also demonstrates that the impact is a positive one. Our author is Dr. Judith N. Martin, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota who is well known in the fields of cross-cultural research and training. Professor Martin first studied the changes in relationships at home with respect to university students who had been abroad, then replicated her methodology using secondary school students who had been on both year-long and summer programs with AFS. Her findings should be useful to all who counsel or work with recent returnees, and will be especially encouraging to the parents of young people who are thinking about participating in a homestay program abroad.

**THE IMPACT OF A HOMESTAY ABROAD
ON RELATIONSHIPS AT HOME**

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It was hard adjusting because I became extremely independent in Germany and learned to do almost everything on my own. When I came home, I kept many things to myself and my mother felt hurt. It was negative at first, but after we both readjusted we became closer than ever before.

My friend and I don't talk as much. I find we're not the same anymore. She doesn't understand how much more there is outside of Montana. We've grown apart some. She just doesn't understand what happened to me. We still talk, but I've stopped telling her about Germany. Sometimes she seems frustratingly superficial.

There is almost no communication between my friend and me. It's as if there is a difference between us that can't be reversed. I know the changes are because I have lived abroad. But I don't know why the changes have occurred. I am really mad and sad that we aren't friends anymore, but it is almost as if we can't be.

These AFS students' descriptions of their feelings about friends and family illustrate the difficulty many people living abroad have in returning home. In fact, there is reason to believe that readjusting to the home culture may be more difficult for some sojourners than adjusting to the foreign culture. These difficulties are a result, in part, of unmet expectations.

When sojourning abroad, one expects to encounter people and customs that are new and different. On returning home, one expects to encounter only the familiar and to feel easily "at home." However, as these AFS students and many other people who have lived abroad can attest, the experience of returning home does not always conform to these expectations. Familiar faces and places often appear strange to the returnee. Most likely, the sojourner has changed, having adopted new ways of thinking and behaving. Friends and family members may have changed. Familiar scenes may have changed as well. As a result of these unanticipated changes, returnees typically find themselves in the curious position of being a stranger in their own land -- of experiencing what many researchers term "reverse culture shock."

There have been several previous studies documenting re-entry difficulties experienced by returning sojourners in re-establishing relationships with friends and family members. For example, Gama and Pedersen (1977) surveyed a group of Brazilian Fulbright students returning home after studying in the United States. These students reported that relationships with families were problematic, especially for the female students, who had adopted the less conservative norms of the U.S. and found it difficult to return to the more restrictive Brazilian society. In another study, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) surveyed 5300 U.S. students and scholars after their return home from studying abroad. These returnees reported that changes in family relationships were a source of difficulty in readjusting to their home environment. This was especially true for the younger scholars who had never been abroad before.

However, an exploratory study that I completed in 1982 suggested that not all relationships are problematic for returning students. In this earlier study, college students who had recently returned from a sojourn abroad reported that their relationships with parents and siblings changed less dramatically and less negatively than their relationships with friends. Positive changes in some relationships were reported by some of my subjects.

Certainly, communication with friends and family members is critical during the re-entry transition. As Koester (1983) has suggested, it is through interaction with friends and family that returning sojourners understand and interpret changes within themselves and in the home environment. For their part, friends and family members can assist the returnee to readjust and reintegrate into life back home.

On the one hand, then, there is evidence that relationships may be problematic for the student returning from abroad. On the other hand, there is some evidence that relationships can ease the process of reintegration into the home environment. In an attempt to better understand changes in the relationships of returnees as well as the role of communication with friends and family in the readjustment process, I carried out a study of secondary school students who had recently returned from a homestay abroad under the auspices of AFS

International. This study, which was assisted by AFS's Research Department, attempted to answer three specific questions:

1. How do recently returned students evaluate their current communication with parents, siblings, and friends?
2. How do returnees evaluate changes that may have occurred in these relationships since their departure for their homestay abroad?
3. How do returnees describe specific changes in their patterns of communication with parents, siblings, and friends?

In order to answer these questions, I distributed questionnaires concerning re-entry relationships to a sample of 300 recently returned AFS students; 173 of these responded. The sample consisted entirely of U.S. students who had returned approximately four months earlier from one of four programs: 79 had participated in a summer homestay in Germany, 26 in a year homestay in Germany, 58 in a summer homestay in Turkey, and 10 in a year homestay in Turkey.

As in most programs in which U.S. students are sent abroad, the majority of the group was female (80%); the average age was 18. At the time that these returnees completed the questionnaire, about three-fourths were living at home, just under one-fourth were living in dormitories, and a couple of students were living on their own in apartments.

The returnees in this study were asked to identify three to five personal relationships that had been "meaningful" to them before their AFS experience; they were expected to identify at least one parent or guardian, one sibling (if they had one), and one friend. They were instructed to describe the currently existing quality and frequency of communication in each of the relationships identified.¹ Separate questions asked the returnees to indicate the extent to which each relationship had changed, both positively and negatively, since their return home. The questionnaire finally asked the returnees why they thought the relationships had changed and how their communication with those identified had changed relative to the way it had been prior to their homestay abroad.

¹A seven-point scale was developed by the author to measure quality in the relationships from the students' descriptions. A complete description of this scale may be found in: Martin, J.N. "Patterns of Communication in Three Types of Reentry Relationships." *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1986). [in press]

Analyses of all 173 responses revealed that the returnees' descriptions of their current relationships varied with the type of relationship described. On the whole, relationships with friends were evaluated less positively than relationships with parents and siblings.

In over 80% of the relationships with parents, the returnees reported that communication was good to extremely good, whereas the same high ratings were given in 65% of the relationships with both siblings and friends. In only about 2% of the relationships with parents was communication evaluated as very or extremely poor, while 4% of sibling relationships and 13% of friend relationships were characterized in these terms. Statistical tests of the data confirm that, on the average, the quality of communication with parents was rated as considerably better than it was with either friends or siblings.

The pattern for frequency of communication was similar to the one found for quality of communication. Only 2% of the respondents reported that they rarely or never communicated with their parents, but 20% of them reported this extremely low frequency with both siblings and friends. On the other hand, an extremely high frequency of communication was reported in 6% of relationships with parents and 5% of relationships with friends, but in less than 1% of relationships with siblings.

In summary, these returned AFS students assessed their communication with their parents as being significantly higher in frequency and in quality than their communication with siblings and friends. Typical descriptions of communication with parents follow:

My mother and I talk about things all the time. We do many things together and enjoy each other's company.

My mother and I speak openly about every subject. This is very often and done freely.

My father and I have an excellent relationship. At the moment I am applying to college and he is helpful, thoughtful, and considerate. We share mutual interests and talk often.

While communication with siblings was reported as less frequent, quality was generally high:

My brother and I get along great and do a few things together, such as seeing a movie. Once in a while we have some great talks and I always try to give him advice on girls and such.

We have a good "rap" at least once a week, but we are very close without talking.

There was more variation in the students' descriptions of the quality and frequency of their communication with friends, as shown in these examples.

Quality is low and frequency is high. Main conversation is polite talk. Communication is minimal.

We get together every once in a while and we always spend hours when we do get together. We have pretty much the same ideals. Our time together is well spent.

Two separate items on the questionnaire asked the returnees to indicate the extent to which the designated relationships had changed, both positively and negatively, after their return home. In general, the results indicate that relationships with parents improved following the respondents' return from the homestay abroad. Fully three-fourths of the relationships with parents were identified as improving a great deal. In contrast, two-thirds of sibling relationships and over half of friend relationships were described as showing equally positive change. Only 8% of parent relationships were described as having no positive change, whereas 14% of sibling relationships and 22% of relationships with friends were characterized in this way.

The question regarding change revealed that relationships with friends changed more negatively than relationships with siblings or parents. One fifth of relationships with friends were described as deteriorating a great deal. In contrast, only 2% of parent relationships, and only 1% of sibling relationship were described in this way.

The final items on the questionnaire asked the returnees to describe specifically how and why their communication had changed within each designated relationship. Their responses were analyzed to discover the dimensions of communication that were mentioned most frequently. Six dimensions emerged and are described below. The responses were analyzed again to discover the presence or absence of change in each dimension for each relationship.

1. Closeness - Distance: This dimension refers to the overall social distance between two people. Changed feelings of distance were mentioned very frequently by the returnees and the change usually was viewed as resulting from their homestay abroad. Decreased social distance was reported for some relationships ("We seem a lot closer now") while increased distance was found in other relationships ("We just don't seem to be as close since I came back").

2. Equality - Inequality: This dimension describes the degree to which the communication occurs between equals. In some cases, the

respondents wrote that after their return home they communicated with others more as equals ("We're on the same level"), while in other cases they found themselves communicating with others on an unequal basis ("I had surpassed him").

3. Appreciation - Resentment: This dimension describes certain positive or negative feelings within the relationship. The returnees characterized some relationships as more appreciative ("We realized how special the friendship is") or as more resentful and jealous ("He resents me because of my experience").

4. Deepness - Superficiality: This dimension describes the degree of depth of the communication. The returnees reported that their communication in some relationships became deeper ("We talk more deeply") while in other relationships it became more superficial ("Our communication doesn't seem to be as deep now").

5. Openness - Guardedness: This dimension concerns the breadth of interaction. It includes the number of topics discussed, the amount of detail brought out within each topic area, and the general amount of interaction. The returnees reported that in some relationships the communication became more open ("We discuss more topics") or that the communication became more guarded ("We talk less, don't have a lot to talk about").

6. Smoothness - Difficulty: This dimension refers to the ease of the communication and the degree to which interactions are free of misunderstanding. In some relationships, communication was described as easier ("We understand each other better"), whereas in others the communication was described as more difficult ("We don't get along as well").

Trained raters analyzed the returnees' responses for the presence or absence of change in each of these six dimensions of communication, using three categories for each dimension:

- = negative change (for example, more distance)
- 0 = no change
- + = positive change (for example, more closeness)

Each set of responses for each relationship was scored on these six dimensions. For example, a description of a parent relationship could have had the following set of scores:

<u>Dimensions</u>		<u>Scores</u>
Closeness - Distance	=	+ (more closeness)
Equality - Inequality	=	+ (more nearly equal)
Appreciation - Resentment	=	+ (more appreciation)
Deepness - Superficiality	=	0 (no change)
Openness - Guardedness	=	0 (no change)
Smoothness - Difficulty	=	+ (more smoothness)

In this hypothetical example, there was no negative change in any of the dimensions of communication.

This method of data analysis revealed a distinct pattern of communication for each of the three types of relationships. The following section will present these three patterns and discuss the implications and interpretations of the results.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Previous research has documented the impact of a homestay abroad for young sojourners. Results of these studies suggest that living abroad may have positive outcomes such as increased independence, self-confidence, and worldmindedness, and decreased ethnocentrism. It is also possible that the homestay abroad and the separation from one's natural parents and family leads to accelerated maturation. Although rapid increase in maturation is difficult to document, comments from the returnees themselves suggest that this might be the case. For example, one of the AFS returnees in this study remarked:

I think the trip made me grow up faster than I would have. It helped change my outlook on life, the world, and the people of the world. After I returned from Turkey, I realized that my relationships with other people had changed. I feel that I am older mentally and that people my age are immature. I get along with people who are older than myself.

In examining personal changes such as these in the context of the parent-child relationship, we should keep in mind that increased maturity, independence, and self-reliance tend to be encouraged and anticipated in older adolescents, at least in Western cultures. These changes, accelerated by the sojourn experience, help the parent-child relationship transform itself more rapidly into a relationship between adults. Since this transformation is expected, its rapid occurrence is viewed positively by children as well as by parents. The positive view of this process by children is reflected in the way the respondents in this study described changes in their relationships and communication with their parents.

Closeness - Distance

Almost all (96%) of the respondents mentioned the closeness-distance dimension. Of these, three-fourths reported greater closeness while only 6% reported more distance in their relationships with their parents after their return home. One-fifth reported no change. In discussing the increased closeness with a parent, one of the returnees made this comment:

We speak less often (I am now at college), but now I feel we are closer. Due to my time in Germany I feel a certain affinity for my father. I feel much closer to him now that I have been in his homeland for a time.

Equality - Inequality

Over four-fifths of the respondents referred to the equality-inequality dimension regarding relationships with their parents. Of these, almost three-fourths reported feeling more nearly equal to their parents, just under one-fourth reported no change, and about 4% mentioned that they sensed increased inequality. Most reported that their parents now treat them as adults, more as peers than children:

When my mother and I talk now, it is on an adult basis. We talk about joys and concerns.

Some viewed this change as resulting from their newfound maturity and independence:

I feel that I have grown closer to my mother. I now feel as if she is more of a friend to me. I have matured and now understand my mother better.

Appreciation - Resentment

Three-fifths of the respondents described parental relationships in terms of appreciation or resentment; of these, over half described their communication as more appreciative, usually as a result of their homestay experience. This finding underscores one of the chief advantages of a homestay experience over other study-abroad programs, namely, that the participant is directly and thoroughly involved in the day-to-day life of a new family. As one subject remarked:

Before I left, I didn't really care what my father did. As long as he left me alone I didn't care. My Turkish father was never home. I realized that I wanted my dad around more. Now when Dad's home, I try to make the best of it. You know, quality, not quantity.

For some AFSers, it was simply the time away from their families, the opportunity to miss their families, that led to greater appreciation of them:

My having lived abroad brought me much closer to my mother. In being apart from her I realized how much she meant to me.

Smoothness - Difficulty

Communication with parents was described as smoother. With 85% of the responses containing references to the smoothness-difficulty dimension, 57% of these referred to increased ease of interaction while only 9% reported more difficulty.

Before I left, my father and I seldom spoke, but only to argue. Now we speak easily and freely, both regarding each other as more mature persons.

Openness - Guardedness

Almost 75% of the respondents referred to the openness-guardedness dimension. Of these, almost half reported that communication with their parents was more open as a result of their intercultural experience.

We talk a great deal now. We can discuss more subjects freely.

If our communication has changed at all, it has been for the better. My father and I speak more often over a wide range of topics.

Two-fifths reported no change in this dimension and one-tenth reported more guardedness. It should be noted that some respondents mentioned initial difficulties with parents. They described the problems in their relationships during the period of transition, when both parents and children were re-adjusting to changes in the children such as greater maturity and self-reliance.

At first when I came back, it was difficult to talk with my mother. I felt almost like a stranger. After these last four months of being back I am again able to communicate freely with her.

In summary, the findings of this study indicate that relationships with natural parents improve after the adolescent child's homestay abroad. The recently returned AFSers who were the subjects of this study tended to describe their relationships with

parents as high in quality and as having changed positively. Most of the returnees reported that they were closer to their parents and that communication with them had become smoother, more open, more appreciative, and was on a more nearly equal basis.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH SIBLINGS

As indicated earlier, respondents described the communication with their siblings as fairly high in quality although moderate to low in frequency. The changes in sibling relationships were described in much in the same way as changes in parental relationships; that is, much more positive change was reported than negative change. However, in general, there was less change reported in sibling relationships than in parental relationships. Possibly, this reduced amount of change can be attributed to the fact that either the returnees or their siblings, or both, no longer lived at home. This possibility seems to be supported by the relatively low frequency of communication with siblings reported by the returnees. It is also possible that sibling relationships were less important for these returnees than relationships with friends or parents.

Closeness - Distance

Of the 68% of respondents who mentioned the closeness-distance dimension with respect to siblings, over two-thirds reported more closeness, one-fifth reported no change, and some 13% reported less closeness.

We became a bit closer while I was away. In the past I didn't feel I could talk to my sister about everything and anything, but now I definitely do. Whenever I have a problem I just pick up the phone and call.

I think we have grown closer to a certain extent. Before I left, my brother was really worrying about me (which surprised me) and he genuinely missed me while I was abroad. This opened things up and as he gets older I believe we will grow even closer.

Appreciation - Resentment

Over two-thirds of the responses regarding siblings referred to the appreciation-resentment dimension; of these, only 7% reported more resentment while 42% reported more appreciation.

I think that my brother grew up a lot over the summer. Along with my changes, he and I communicate on a much better level. I think that through my summer away, we both realized what it is like not to have each other.

Equality - Inequality

Two-thirds of the returnees made reference to the equality-inequality dimension; almost half of these reported feeling more nearly equal with their siblings, especially older siblings.

I am more open with her on personal thoughts. I am not as afraid to give advice (she is older) as I used to be. Now I'm older and she no longer sees me as her little sister.

There is a little more communication. We speak more as equals. My leaving on such a trip made my brother realize his little sister had grown up a lot since the last times we really spent together.

Smoothness - Difficulty

Of the 90% who described sibling relationships in terms of smoothness or difficulty, 5% reported more difficult communication, 37% indicated no change, and 55% said communication with siblings was smoother.

I think now that I can accept all of the different qualities of people and therefore get along easier with my brother.

Before, we hated each other, but now we talk without fighting usually. He now knows that I'm not a little baby and that I can handle situations that he can't.

In summary, the findings of this study suggest that the AFS student's relationships with his or her siblings tend to improve after the return from a homestay abroad. Even though less change in either positive or negative direction was reported (relative to the changes experienced with parents), the returnees did report in most cases that they felt closer to their siblings and that communication with them was smoother, more appreciative, and more nearly equal.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS

The data reveal that relationships with friends are as likely to deteriorate as to improve, in contrast to relationships with parents and siblings, which generally strengthen. The findings also suggest that relationships with friends tend to be more complex and varied than relationships with parents and siblings.

Closeness - Distance

Of the 94% of the respondents who spoke of closeness or distance in describing their relationships with friends, 45% indicated that there was greater closeness while 42% reported greater distance. Most of the subjects reported a change in this dimension, then, but the change was about as likely to be negative as to be positive.

Our communication has changed dramatically. Before I left we were very close. Now that I've returned, we are distant. While I was away, she made new friends, resulting in my being left out when I returned.

We weren't very close until she started to write me in Turkey. I got a lot of needed support from her and it continued when I got back.

Equality - Inequality

Over half of the returnees mentioned the equality-equality dimension in discussing their relationships with friends. Of these, 39% felt that they had become more nearly equal in relationships with friends while 33% reported that these relationships were now more unequal than before their homestay abroad. A possible explanation is that the APS students return home operating on a more adult level than others their age. Relationships with parents, older siblings, and older friends may improve because the returnee has become more mature, and these relationships are characterized by greater equality. These same changes -- increased maturity, independence, and worldmindedness, for example -- tend to have a negative impact on relationships with former peers because they no longer are peers. Similarity tends to be valued in peer relationships, and since the returnee and his or her friend often find themselves no longer similar, the basis for communication as equals is felt to have disappeared. Relationships that were described as becoming more unequal were often described less explicitly than relationships in which friends became more equal. It appears as if there is either less interest in these relationships now, or that the returnee does not fully understand what has happened in the relationship. For example:

There is almost no communication between my friend and me. It's as if there is a difference between us that can't be reversed. I know the changes are because I have lived abroad. But I don't know why the changes have occurred. I am really mad and sad that we aren't friends anymore, but it is almost as if we can't be.

Smoothness - Difficulty

Of the 92% of the subjects who alluded to the smoothness-difficulty dimension, 41% characterized communication with friends as being smoother and 39% characterized it as being more difficult. Again, as many relationships showed deterioration as showed improvement. Negative change is noticeably more frequent than in the case of parents or siblings; the explanation for this high incidence of greater difficulty may be the same as set forth in the previous paragraph concerning the equality-inequality dimension. It is important to note that smoother relations with friends were frequently linked to the friends' demonstrated interest in the AFSer's homestay experience.

We still talk about mostly the same things but she is very interested in Germany and what I did there. I feel we have more to talk about because of my trip.

And in a few cases, greater smoothness of communication was attributed to the fact that the friend also had participated in an intercultural homestay.

She went with AFS to Tunisia. Our feelings and a lot of our experiences are similar and each of us is interested in the other's experience. AFS has such an impact on our lives and only another AFSer can relate to this.

Openness - Guardedness

Some 72% of the respondents mentioned the openness-guardedness dimension. Of these, only about a quarter reported more openness; 45% viewed their communication with friends as more guarded. In many cases, the feeling of having to be guarded was reflective of the fact that the returnees had gained knowledge that was not available to their friends.

She doesn't understand how much more there is outside of Montana. She just doesn't understand what happened to me. We still talk, but I've stopped telling her about Germany.

Deepness - Superficiality

Of the 60% who described relationships with friends in terms of deepness or superficiality, only about a fifth reported deeper communication while just under half reported increased superficiality.

Again, this high rate of negative change was linked in many cases to the contrast between the ranges of interest and knowledge on the parts of the returnee and the friend.

I feel less close to her now. Her whole world is high school. I'm more interested in foreign countries and cultures now.

We had always had different values, future plans, etc. But our slightest differences have developed into almost clashing characteristics I have become a lot more open-minded, "worldly" perhaps, and she can't relate to it.

Romantic Relationships

There was one subcategory of "friend" relationships that showed an especially high incidence of negative change: romantic relationships. (Thirty-two romantic relationships were positively identified.) Whereas only one-fifth of all friend relationships, 2% of parent relationships, and 1% of sibling relationships were characterized as deteriorating a great deal, over one-third of the romantic relationships were so characterized. The returnees frequently attributed the disintegration of the romance to the fact that their rapid personal growth had left them little in common with their partner.

Before I went to Turkey, he was not only my boyfriend, but one of my closest friends. After I got back, we just couldn't relate to each other. We both were very hurt by this; we'd been so close and all of a sudden had nothing in common and had to end the relationship.

Before I left we could communicate very well. Now we don't communicate at all. When I returned home, my boyfriend felt that I had matured quite a bit during my stay. He felt that I had surpassed him.

Some of the students reported that their romantic relationships changed for the better. Almost one-fifth of the romantic relationships were seen as improving a great deal, which is almost the same as the proportion reported for friends in general. The relationships that changed positively did so because the students had maintained close contact with their partners.

While in Germany I began to doubt our relationship, but his letters brought me out of that. It was important to get something and send something every other day at least.

Or, in rare instances, the changes within the returnee were a positive influence on the relationship.

Before we were not very close. We didn't really share our inner thoughts and feelings. I think we both grew in our separation. I learned many new things abroad and I am a slightly different person now. I think this has brought us closer.

In summary, the findings of this study reveal that in many instances, relationships with peers disintegrate following the return of the AFSer from the homestay abroad. Within all five of the categories in which there were significant findings, from one-third to one-half of the returnees' relationships with friends were described as changing negatively. (Positive changes were also reported in about as many cases.) The data suggest that romantic attachments may be especially prone to deterioration following the return of one of the partners from a homestay abroad. In the cases of both romances and other friendships, the underlying cause of negative changes was often identified as the comparatively rapid maturation and increase in knowledge on the part of the AFSer, undermining the commonality in which the relationship formerly had been grounded. While the evidence from this study points to this explanation, it should be remembered that friendships among adolescents may be less stable generally than relationships with either parents or siblings, and may be more likely to change in any event.

REASONS FOR CHANGES IN RELATIONSHIPS

The returnees also were asked, for each relationship, to indicate whether the changes in communication were due to their AFS experience or to other circumstances. This was an open-ended question and the responses were analyzed by the raters and coded into one of three categories:

1. Changes due primarily to the AFS experience
2. Changes due to a combination of the AFS experience and circumstances not related to AFS
2. Changes due primarily to circumstances not related to AFS.

A summary of the returnees' responses is presented in Table 1, at the top of the following page.

Table 1. Reasons for Changes in Re-entry Relationships with Parents, Siblings, and Friends.

REASON	RELATIONSHIP		
	<u>Parent</u> (N = 129)	<u>Sibling</u> (N = 95)	<u>Friend</u> (N = 103)
1. Primarily AFS experience	56%	59%	63%
2. Combination of AFS & other circumstances	29%	25%	15%
3. Primarily other circumstances	15%	16%	22%

The reasons given for changes in relationships with parents and siblings are well illustrated by the following statements:

I think that, while abroad, I learned that you must say what you mean and can't expect people to read your mind. This discovery helps me greatly in daily life and in dealings with my mother.

The negative changes occurred because I wanted more freedom when I got home, due to the independence I gained over the summer. The positive changes are that I matured and grew so much in my AFS experience that I can communicate better.

Some changes are from living abroad and some just from growing up. My sister doesn't live at home now and she gives me advice. I appreciate her more because of relationships I had last summer.

In their relationships with friends, 22% of the respondents attributed the changes to circumstances not related to AFS such as either or both of the friends moving out of town, going away to college, and so forth. But 63% (the highest figure in Table 1) saw the changes they had experienced with their friends as stemming from the influence of their homestay abroad.

Unfortunately, I think the change was because I went away this summer. J.S. needed someone to "temporarily replace" me, I think. I think I have become a lot more open-minded, "worldly" perhaps, and she can't relate to it.

I have grown this summer and she stayed stagnant. We used to talk only about boys. Now I can only stand so much. It seems that she talks, but doesn't say anything.

It should be noted that in many cases the deterioration of a friendship was not perceived as negative.

These changes appear to be negative because of the fact that we are no longer good friends. However, I think of these changes more as a positive effect because I realized that my needs were changing and therefore some of my friends would have to change to accommodate these needs.

Yes, these changes are due to my living abroad. I see it as a negative thing, but am very glad it happened because I realize I don't want friends like that.

The numerous statements such as these that were collected in the course of this study provide convincing evidence that an intercultural homestay experience tends to have a major and direct impact on the quality of young people's relationships with parents, siblings, and friends. While it is true that certain changes may come about in the absence of an intercultural homestay (for instance, one or both friends still would have gone away to college, leading to alterations in patterns of communication), the data collected from these 173 AFS returnees seem to indicate clearly that living with a new family in an unfamiliar culture has had a direct and usually positive impact on their relationships with family and friends.

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* These two forthcoming articles by Judith N. Martin are more academic treatments of the data discussed in this Occasional Paper.

. . . noted in passing . . .

Ideally, what should be said to every child, repeatedly, throughout his or her school life is something like this:

"You are in the process of being indoctrinated. We have not yet evolved a system of education that is not a system of indoctrination. We are sorry, but it is the best we can do. What you are being taught here is an amalgam of current prejudice and the choices of this particular culture. The slightest look at history will show how impermanent these must be. You are being taught by people who have been able to accommodate themselves to a regime of thought laid down by their predecessors. It is a self-perpetuating system. Those of you who are more robust and individual than others, will be encouraged to leave and find ways of educating yourself -- educating your own judgement. Those who stay must remember, always, and all the time, that they are being moulded and patterned to fit into the narrow and particular needs of this particular society."

Doris Lessing. "Introduction" (dated July 1971) to the third printing of *The Golden Notebook* (1962). Copyright 1971 by Doris Lessing.*

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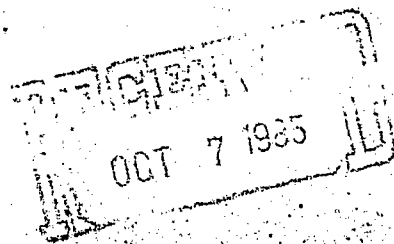
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AFS volunteers and professional staff throughout the world are moving towards the goal of peace by stimulating an awareness of mankind's common humanity, a wider understanding of the diverse cultures of the world, and a concern for the global issues confronting society. They acknowledge that peace is a dynamic concept threatened by injustices both between and within nations.

In pursuit of this goal, the core of the AFS experience has been the promotion of relationships in which families, communities, groups and maturing young persons from different cultural backgrounds share new learning situations related to the purposes of AFS. In addition, through experience and experimentation, AFS has developed and continues to encourage new models and opportunities for exchange that will be beneficial for the development of society.

AFS does not affiliate with any religious, political or partisan group, but it believes in the value of participating in a continuous process of interaction between cultures both across and within boundaries.

AFS encourages all participants to involve themselves in situations in which they can apply and project their AFS experience.