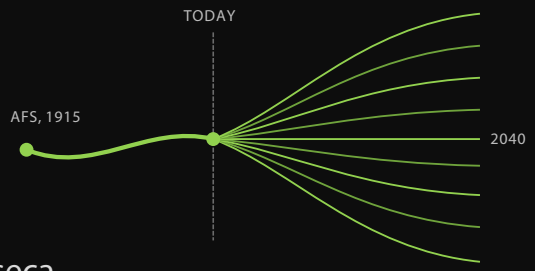
AFS NETWORK MEETING 2026 - BOGOTÁ

One Story, Many Futures

Take-home notes from the keynote by Diego E. Leal Fonseca



FOUR KEYS, FOUR QUESTIONS

Bring them into your conversations today, and back home to your board and your team.

1. KEY 1: RECOGNIZE THE EXPECTED FUTURE
   What future are we assuming without noticing?
2. KEY 2: QUESTION THE EXPECTED FUTURE
   What trends and signals challenge that future?
3. KEY 3: EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUTURES
   What else could AFS become in 2040?
4. KEY 4: BUILD DESIRABLE FUTURES
   Which futures do we want to build, for whom, and who's missing from the table?

If we choose a particular future in 2040, what would we need to start doing next Monday?

FLIP THE FUTURE

A five-minute game for your board or your team

1. **Take something** that is true about your organization today, so obvious that you rarely question it.
2. **Imagine its opposite.** Not because you want it to happen, but because it may reveal possibilities you had not considered.
3. **Ask: how could we get there?** What would have to change? Is that a future we would want?

FROM THE TALK

TRUE TODAY An AFS experience usually lasts a year. → **WHAT IF…** it lasted a lifetime?

TRUE TODAY To live AFS, you need a passport. → **WHAT IF…** you didn't?

TRUE TODAY Four AFS national partners are in Africa. → **WHAT IF…** Africa became one of AFS's greatest centers of growth by 2040?

SOURCES

Data and ideas cited in the talk.

DEMOGRAPHIC GRAVITY

28% of everyone under 25 lives in Africa
Pew Research Center, 5 facts about Africa's population growth (2026) pewresearch.org

Fertility below replacement in Europe and Latin America
Pew Research Center, 5 facts about global fertility trends (2025) pewresearch.org

HUMAN CONNECTION IN AN AI WORLD

72% of U.S. teens have used an AI companion; 1 in 3 users chose it over a person for something serious
Common Sense Media, Talk, Trust, and Trade-Offs (2025) commonsensemedia.org

More than half of U.S. teens use chatbots for schoolwork
Pew Research Center, How Teens Use and View AI (2026) pewresearch.org

About 1 in 5 young people feel lonely
World Health Organization, Commission on Social Connection (2025) who.int

POLARIZATION BEYOND BORDERS

Misinformation and societal polarization among the top global risks
World Economic Forum, Global Risks Report 2026 weforum.org

IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

3 in 4 young people think the future is frightening
Hickman et al., The Lancet Planetary Health (2021) doi.org

"Used futures"
Sohail Inayatullah, Six pillars: futures thinking for transforming, Foresight (2008) doi.org

Life-paths diagram
Adapted from Tim Urban, Wait But Why x.com

DESIRABLE FOR WHOM?

A voice for people not yet born
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales futuregenerations.wales

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Want to try these keys with your board or your team? Let's talk.

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