



# Through the eyes of future teachers

Vlad Coraci, Melany Mistrorigo and Chiara Bernardi report on The Alliance for International Education conference

Between 6 and 8 October 2017 the Alliance for International Education held its biennial conference in Amsterdam on the topic of internationalizing schools. Among the multitude of representatives who attended the event were ten lucky future teachers from Stenden University: Chiara Bernardi, Melany Mistrorigo, Lena Boßmann, Vlad Coraci, Marleen Bosma, Jorijn Vuyk, Noëlle van der Sligte, Melina Knispel, Emma Golles and Christina Kulle-Gutoskie. This is an account of that event through the eyes of these student teachers.

AIE conferences bring together people involved in the promotion of intercultural understanding and international education (AIE, 2017) and that is precisely what we had the privilege to experience: listening to distinguished guest speakers at the seminars and lectures, learning new practices

from teachers from all over the world, and at the same time contributing to the dialogue with our own ideas. On a misty Saturday morning, we also held a plenary session where we shared our view of what 'international' means to us. We told the stories that made us global nomads and what brought us to the ITEps (International Teacher Education for Primary Schools) programme. Many of the key issues that we pointed out during our session resonated with the experiences of international students and international teachers. This was undeniably a huge opportunity for us as it put us on the map for the representatives of international schools at the conference, and it sparked engaging conversations with them. It was so meaningful for us also because these intercultural exchanges allowed us to dig deeper on the

topics brought up during the seminars and to discuss our views with the experts present.

During the conference we also had the chance to actively participate in discussions. Many connected with the dilemmas and questions brought up: Melina Knispel explored the concept of globalism: “think globally, act locally”; Jorijn Vuyk delved into the view we have of international schools and the pitfalls of assuming that they necessarily offer better forms of education than national schools; Chiara Bernardi learnt about the concept-based curriculum as used at CLIP, the International School of Porto, Portugal. The content of the seminars was inspiring and thought-provoking, but what made this conference so powerful was the format that allowed us to get to know professionals from around the globe: we mingled, and we exchanged experiences, thoughts and ideas with them. We related to them, as all participants in this event had a common aim and worked to achieve a common goal: internationalizing the world we now live in.

More inspiration also came from the guest speakers at the plenary sessions, which provoked critical thinking on our part. Prof Dr Marli Huijjer, a Dutch philosopher and Thinker Laureate of The Netherlands, made us reconsider and reflect on our idea of internationalism and global nomadism, and made us acknowledge the feelings of those ‘left behind’. We, citizens of a mobile international world, need to bring change to the world, but as Huijjer states ‘we must consider that movement seems to be impossible if nothing is at rest’ (Huijjer, 2017). On Sunday morning Dr Conrad Hughes,

Principal of the International School of Geneva La Grande Boissière campus, discussed prejudice, its meaning and relevance, and the role that international education can play in reducing it.

This unique experience not only brought onto the table our view on internationalism, but also opened new exciting paths for us. We found similarities between ourselves and the other international teachers participating in the conference, while connecting more deeply on a professional and personal level with those who are already working in the field. We are passionate about international education and we are working hard to be able to fulfill our dream to one day be the teachers of tomorrow. When attending a conference, student teacher are not the colleagues participants might expect to meet, but we were so fortunate to have been a part of this experience. We are still so grateful for having been part of the AIE Conference, which has made a lasting impression for when in the future we will be the ones driving further change in international education.

**References**

Alliance for International Education (2017) [www.intedalliance.org](http://www.intedalliance.org)  
 ITEps (2017) [www.iteps.eu/](http://www.iteps.eu/)

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