

## THE AIE CONFERENCE FROM THE EYES OF FUTURE TEACHERS

On the 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 Alliance for International Education held its biannual conference in Amsterdam on the topic of internationalizing schools and, among the multitude of representatives that attended the event, there 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: listen to distinguished guest speakers at the seminars and lectures, learn new practices from teachers from all over the world and at the same time contribute to the dialogue with our own ideas.

On a misty Saturday morning, we held a plenary session where we shared our point of 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). Many of the key issues that we pointed out during our session resonated with the experiences of international pupils and international teachers. This was undeniably a huge opportunity for us as it put us on the map of the representatives of international schools 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 discuss our opinions with the experts present at the conference.

During the conference we had the chance to also actively participate in the discussions. Many connected with the dilemmas and questions brought up: Melina Knispel explored the concept of Globalism or in other words "think globally, act locally", Jorijn Vuyk delved into the idolization of international schools and the pitfalls of it, Chiara Bernardi learnt about CBC (concept based curriculum) as used at CLIP, International School of Porto, Portugal. The content of the seminars were inspiring and thought-provoking; but what made this conference so powerful was the format that allowed us to know professionals from around the globe: we mingled, we exchanged experiences, thoughts and ideas with them. We related to them, as all guests present at 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 Huijer, Dutch philosopher, made us reconsider and reflect our idea of internationalism and global nomadism, and made us acknowledge the feelings of those "left behind". We, citizens of mobile international world, need bring change to the world without realizing maybe that movement seems to be impossible if there is nothing staying in rest" (Huijer, 6 Oct 2017).

On Sunday morning Conrad Hughes, Principal of the International School of Geneva, discussed prejudice, its meaning and relevance, and the role that international education can play in reducing it.

This unique experience not only brought out on the table our view on internationalism, but opened new exciting paths for us. We found similarities between ourselves and the other international teachers participating at the conference, we connected deeper on a professional and personal level with those that are already working in the field. We are passionate about international education and we work hard to be able to fulfill our dream to one day be the teachers of tomorrow.

When going to a conference, student teacher are not the colleagues you might expect to meet but we were so fortunate to have been a part of this experience. We are still so grateful for being part of the AIE Conference because we know that this has made a lasting impression for when in the future we will be the ones driving further change of international education.

Vlad Coraci  
Melany Mistrorigo  
Chiara Bernardi