

Call us the quiet Peace-Makers!

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A successful future-oriented policy that aims on an education – whether it is secondary, tertiary or life-long learning – which wants to be efficient, effective and innovative, has to be based on international standards.

In a world that is changing rapidly, which is conflicted along poverty-wealth and war-peace lines, people have to be educated primarily with reflection of equality, respectfulness, tolerance, flexibility and knowledge on how it feels to be a stranger.

In our daily business as international officers, we contribute a little to world peace! The students and teachers we send abroad or attract to our universities from other countries, are confronted with all obstacles of organising weeks and months outside their comfort zones; hence, we provide a net that catches them in case of emergency.

They are obliged to communicate in languages, which they do not usually call their mother tongue. Although sufficient English is mostly mandatory and required, they sometimes have to adjust to host country languages they have never neither learned nor spoken before, which means, sensitivity to avoid misunderstandings is trained. Eventually, everyone that is sent out has to find solutions to challenges, which have not been in their focus at home.

Those, who were abroad, could not only connect with other cultures and learn about new and different methods of problem-solving, but also experienced, how it is to be a stranger. Especially in the field of arts, internationalisation and networking are highly important. Arts, art-economies and research – especially when they work interlaced – not only have the potential but also have the responsibility, to analyse and actively create processes of necessary change that will shape our society long-term. So it is vitally important in today's crisis times, to educate and support more people through abroad experiences to decrease fear, prejudice, discrimination and nationalism. What is desperately needed in future societies are people, who have the ability to appreciate differentness and courage!

Glowing eyes of people coming into our offices are what we see! We see them from those who want to go abroad and those who came back – they are glowing of excitement, because there are new experiences coming along or because they had faced them. People who experienced curiosity, excitement and knowledge, that one can work out no matter what comes along, cannot be inhuman or short sighted.

Internationalisation is yet not everything, it can neither save the world, nor the human being in general nor bring peace to every corner. However, it can show that connection with



Welcome dinner Incomings WS 2015/16 | Photo: University of Applied Arts Vienna

networks, understanding of cultures (or at least the attempt of it) and immersion in multicultural conditions can broaden narrow point of views and it enables the breaking of chains of phobia.

Moreover, working in an art university, I am more than convinced that the experts whom we are educating, and who will or who are already working in fields of arts and art industries, have to experience borderline situations to then create whatever wakens up and alerts society. They also have to develop and enhance "products" that understand different cultural habits. To be able to do so, they have to understand and appreciate differentness. International offices at universities support this approach quietly but constantly in their daily business! 🍷