

International Mindedness in diverse contexts



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

reaching out and reaching in



Elisabeth Barratt Hacking

All photographs in this presentation are from the project, taken by students and researchers



Photo credit
EBH/ Pilot School

Research project

School Practices for Developing and Assessing International Mindedness (IM) across the IB Continuum



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Foci for this presentation

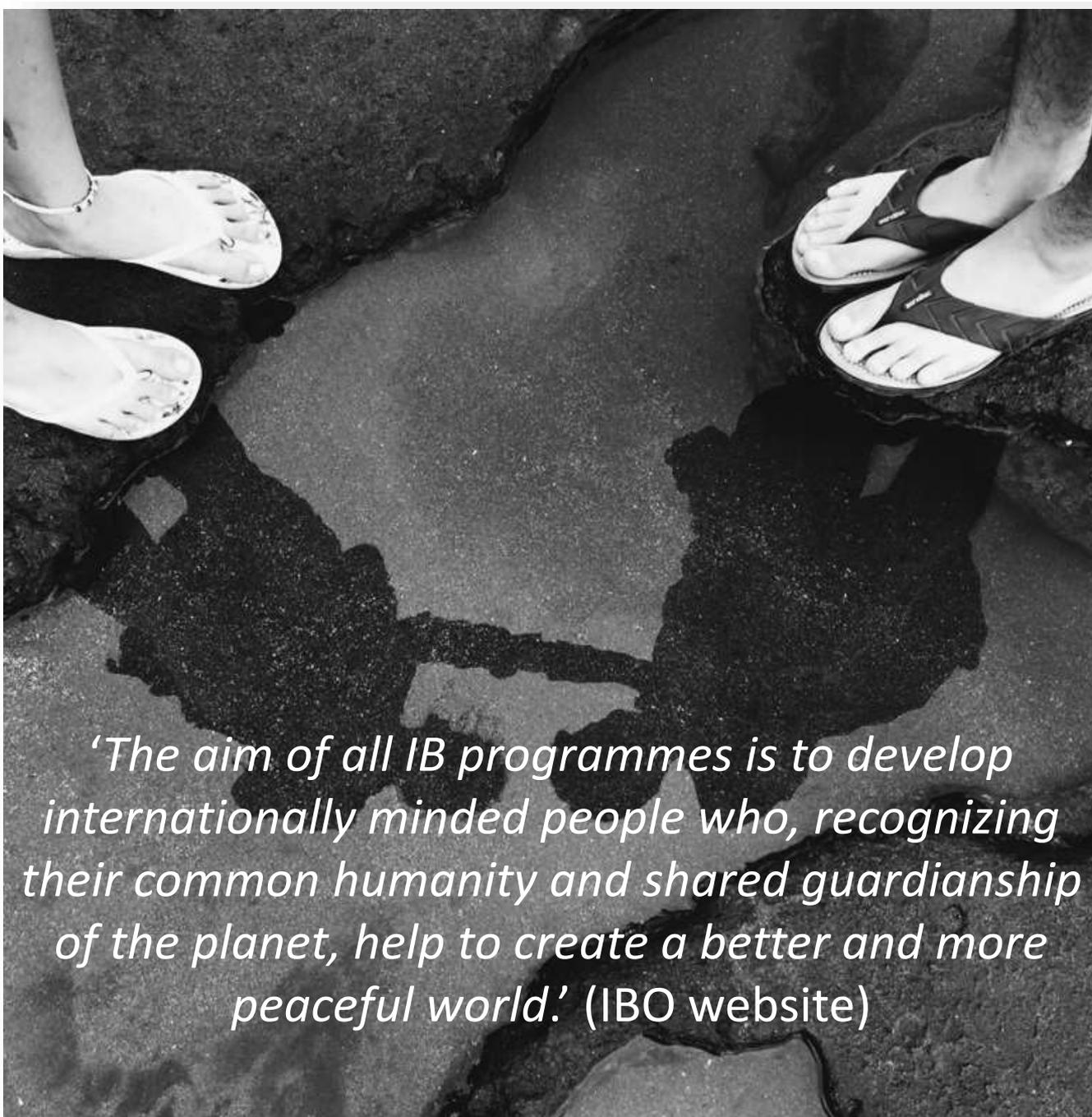
- Exploring the concept of IM
- How we approached the research
- Key findings – thinking about IM
- Key findings - challenges for developing IM in diverse contexts
- Implications for global education

Exploring the concept of International Mindedness

*An International Baccalaureate
Organisation (IBO) concept*

The International Baccalaureate programmes – truth or myth?

1. IB programmes are taught in international schools
2. The IB provides a pre University programme
3. IB programmes are for the privileged
4. IB programmes represent ‘Western’ (‘Northern’) oriented curricular



'The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.' (IBO website)

'Three Pillars'

multilingualism

intercultural understanding



global engagement

Singh, M & Qi, J (2013) *21st Century international-mindedness: an exploratory study of its conceptualisation and assessment*. The Hague: International Baccalaureate Organization

International Mindedness: digging deeper

- a contested/ complex concept
- what do overlapping concepts offer?
e.g. Global Mindedness, Global Citizenship Education, Development Education...
- ‘level of saturation’ e.g. knowing, doing, being
(Waterson & Hayden, 1999)
- ‘level of effect’ e.g. knowing/ doing, transforming self, transforming future (Castro *et al*, 2013)

Digging deeper

- how to enable participants to share their thinking and practice about this complex concept?

How we approached the research

Framework for the Research Questions

- a. How IB schools value, frame and define IM
- b. IM practice and procedure
- c. IM assessment and feedback
- d. Challenges in developing and assessing IM

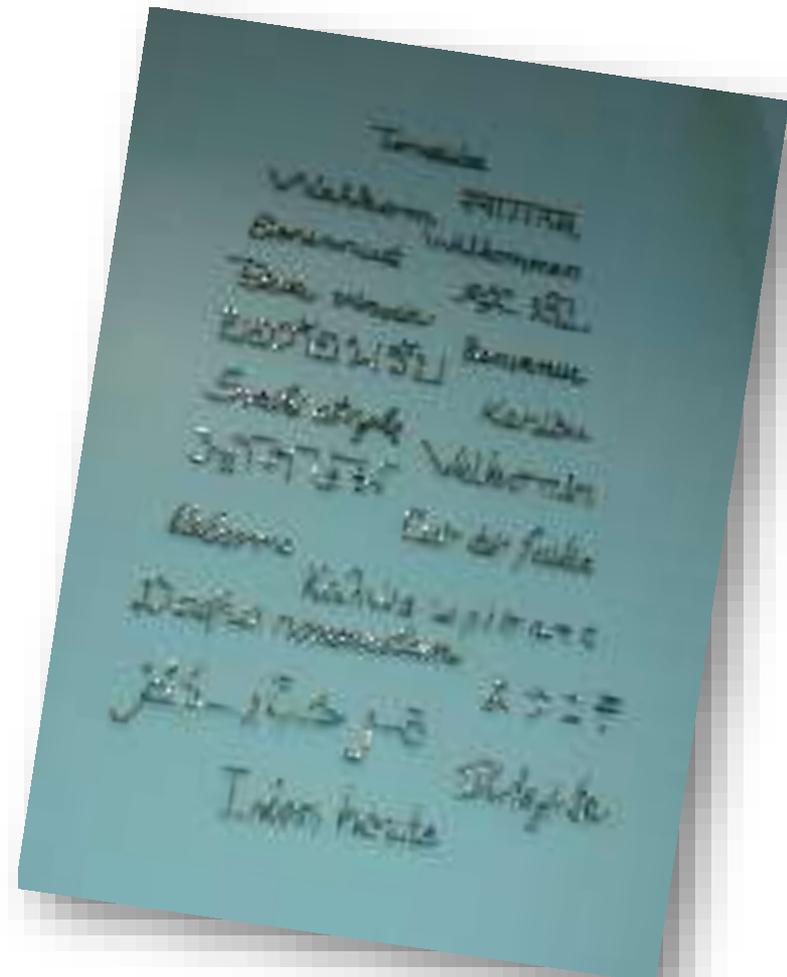


Photo credit: Student photo, Danube (MYP)

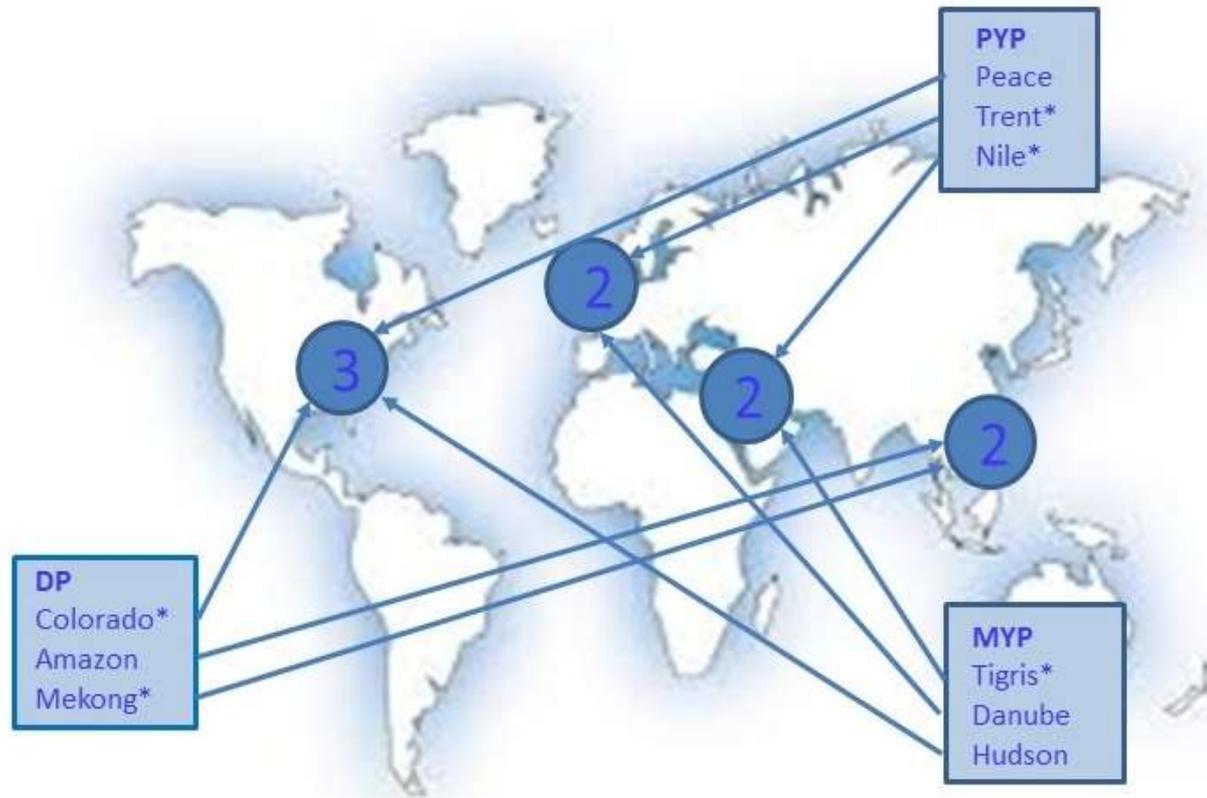
Case study approach

- nine schools reflecting diverse contexts
- Three each - PYP, MYP, DP
- multimethods



Photo credit: researcher, Mekong (DP)

The distribution of sample schools by programme and geographic location



* The school is a continuum school and offers all three IB programmes

Rich and diverse set of contexts

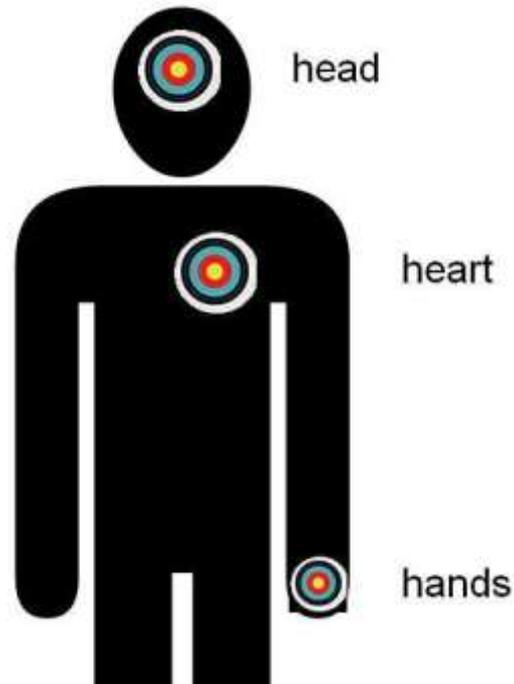
- three offered an Islamic setting
- one was situated in a Christian-oriented setting
- three were state-funded
- one served a predominately non-affluent area
- one small school
- one very well-established IB school
- one of the schools offered a very unequal setting, amidst a localised community living in relative poverty.

Seven tools



1. Interview with the school leader
2. Student-led/ designed tour of the school
3. Focus Groups
 - Senior leaders
 - Teachers
 - Students x 2 i] final year group ii] mixed year groups
4. On-line survey (parents)
5. School audit (survey/ observation)
6. Focused lesson observation plus teacher interview
7. Collection of documents and artefacts / photos

What does it mean to be internationally minded?



visual methods



Case study school, researcher photo

provokes talk/ discussion,
gives participants something
to focus on

can evoke feelings, emotions,
understandings and
perspectives which are hard
to reach

taking photos is practical and
enjoyable

Key findings

Thinking about International
Mindedness



Three pillars

Global engagement was least recognised, and not a concept that most of the schools identified with or found useful –

some schools recognised global engagement as farther afield and distant, whereas others interchanged global and local engagement.

Differences

- some, especially in the primary schools, framed IM through the Learner Profile (set of attributes)
- others used a more skills- or values-based frame
- some schools were actively working on their definition as a school community

Vignette 2: Defining International Mindedness (Mekong (DP))

In 2013, Mekong (DP) embarked on a process to define IM within their school.

This was a collaborative process involving a committee of approximately 30 teachers, students and parents. The committee were asked to research, discuss and write definitions of IM in groups.

They decided to represent IM as a visual definition, as a way to capture the energy of the discussions, and to encourage all members of the community to think about IM for themselves.

The artwork for the definition was designed by a student working group, and the image is full of symbolism representing ideas that came up in the committee meetings.

International-Mindedness

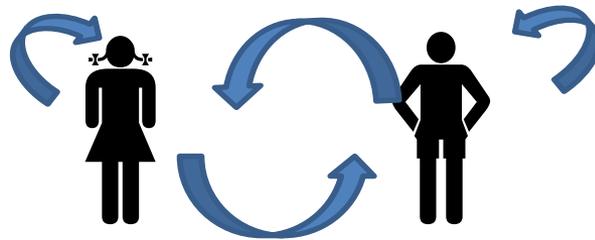


Photo 12: Visual Definition of International Mindedness, Mekong (DP) (School Website)

'I think a process like this is beneficial regardless of the outcome - that process itself is much more important than the definition so what I think it's done is a nice focus on the conversation, and an awareness and understanding amongst all the stakeholders who are sort of aware of what happened, and took part ...' (Principal, Mekong (DP))

Reaching out reaching in

The essence of these understandings were about IM as relational, about *reaching out* in how we interact with others and *reaching in* to understand ourselves in relation to others.



International Mindedness as reaching out and reaching in

Reaching in

The theme of identity emerged as a strong element of IM across all nine case studies



Researcher photograph, Trent (PYP)



Art work entitled 'Multicultural', Researcher photograph, Amazon (DP)

Reaching in

'I think the first step towards being internationally minded is to be culturally minded. You should know who you are, where you come from, your surroundings, your environment, and all that.' (MYP final years student focus group, Tigris (MYP))

'I think you need to be strong in your identity to be able to appreciate other cultures.' (Observed teacher, Danube (MYP))

'As this world is globalising, I feel people might slowly miss their own identity... so, one should stick to their own culture, as well as getting along with other people in different cultures.' (DP 1 student focus group, Amazon (DP))

Reaching out

'that other people, with their differences, can also be right'

IM as a way of relating to the world and to others came across clearly - connection and interaction with others was a key part of IM.



Photo credit: Student photo, Danube (MYP)

Reaching out

'I think a big part is learning about different people, and respecting them, and not being biased to race, or one type of people, changing your point of view you have to be flexible, and be able to accept change, rather than deny it.' (MYP mixed years student focus group, Hudson (MYP))

Reaching out – further afield

‘When you are internationally minded, you don’t tend to think about where you are. You think about others ... like the Paris thing (terrorist attack, November 2015), because we are in America, and it doesn’t directly affect us because it didn’t happen here in America, (but) it still affects others, even if it’s on the other side of the world, it still a really big deal.’ (Student focus group, Hudson (MYP))

Reaching out – local?

There was emphasis on face-to-face interaction with ‘local’ communities and a recognition that the global was also present at the local level...

Amazon (DP) school had a well-developed Creativity Activity Service (CAS) programme which supported the local community living in the ‘kampung’ surrounding the school.

Reaching out – ‘living IM’

- emphasis on action e.g. taking responsibility, helping others, caring for others in everyday interactions.
- in some of the schools there was a strong sense that privilege brings responsibility to do something and make a difference to others.



‘being bothered to really understand and engage in those societies at a personal level ... being bothered enough to do things about injustices’ (Teacher focus group, Amazon (DP))

Reaching out – ‘living IM’

But there was also

concern that any interaction should not be paternalistic, that it should go beyond ‘responsibility for’ and be framed in terms of ‘responsibility towards’.

Amazon (DP) encouraged students to see members of the local community as ‘teachers’ and ‘collaborators’.

For example, some students learned how to build a motorbike from Sandy, a boy from the Kampung (shanty town).



Key findings - challenges for
developing IM in diverse contexts

Differences

The schools had different ways of thinking about and practising IM – this seemed to depend on their context

- ‘connections’, ‘respect’, ‘character building’, ‘local connection’, ‘participation’ and ‘balancing national and international perspectives’
- ‘a way of thinking’, ‘a way of acting’, ‘a way of living’, ‘a mind-set’

Participation

Danube (MYP) was committed strongly to participatory approaches, for example, involving students and parents in formal decision making processes.

This reflected something of the cultural and national context of the school (democracy in Finland)

In sharing the highlights of the school's IM work the Principal referred to '*the students taking action, the student participation and action team*'.





Anti-bullying Tree, Danube (MYP) (Student Photograph)

Limits to IM activity and debate

For Nile (PYP) the opportunities to engage in political debate were constrained, for example, staff reported less scope for debate compared to other IB schools due to the parameters set by the state.

Instead, students had to focus their 'caring' attention on 'soft' issues like caring for animals or helping in a local hospice.

Vignette 1: The Respect for SOLE Policy (Nile (PYP))

Nile (PYP) School has taken the attitude 'respect' and deeply embedded it into every-day practice alongside the core philosophy.

This school has a whole-school policy, based around 'Respect for SOLE'. This has four main aspects that apply to the school community. The school has translated these into statements for the students - for each of the four 'respects' there is one general statement and several detailed statements. The general statements are;

1. Respect for self.
2. Respect for others.
3. Respect for learning.
4. Respect for environment.

The cores aspects of the 'Respect for SOLE' initiative are reflected in posters throughout the school.

'Our Respect Initiative, aims to strengthen the ethos of respect and understanding across the entire school. Ours is a diverse community, with students, parents, teachers and support staff from a variety of cultural, social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Every member of our school community has the right to feel safe and supported in school. Respect is an important concept in any international school and is even more important in the context of our multicultural community.'
(School website).



*Photo 11: Respect for SOLE poster, Nile (PYP)
(Researcher Photograph)*

Schools facing difficult or sensitive regional issues

Finland has experienced an increase in immigration resulting in some negative reactions. This is a challenge to open mindedness and at odds with the concept of intercultural mindedness adopted by this school; in addition such negative views create issues given the school's high levels of cultural and ethnic diversity.

'[Finland is] a very homogeneous country, but, it's changing all the time ... that's a hot potato at the time, with the refugee situation in Europe at the moment.'

(Principal, Danube (MYP))

Reconciling *International* and *national* mindedness

'I wish the school have the students learn first about their own culture, history and local issues before they focus on other cultures ... I don't mean to teach religion, language and history in a biased way but to know the facts before relating them to global issues.' (Parent Survey, Tigris (MYP))

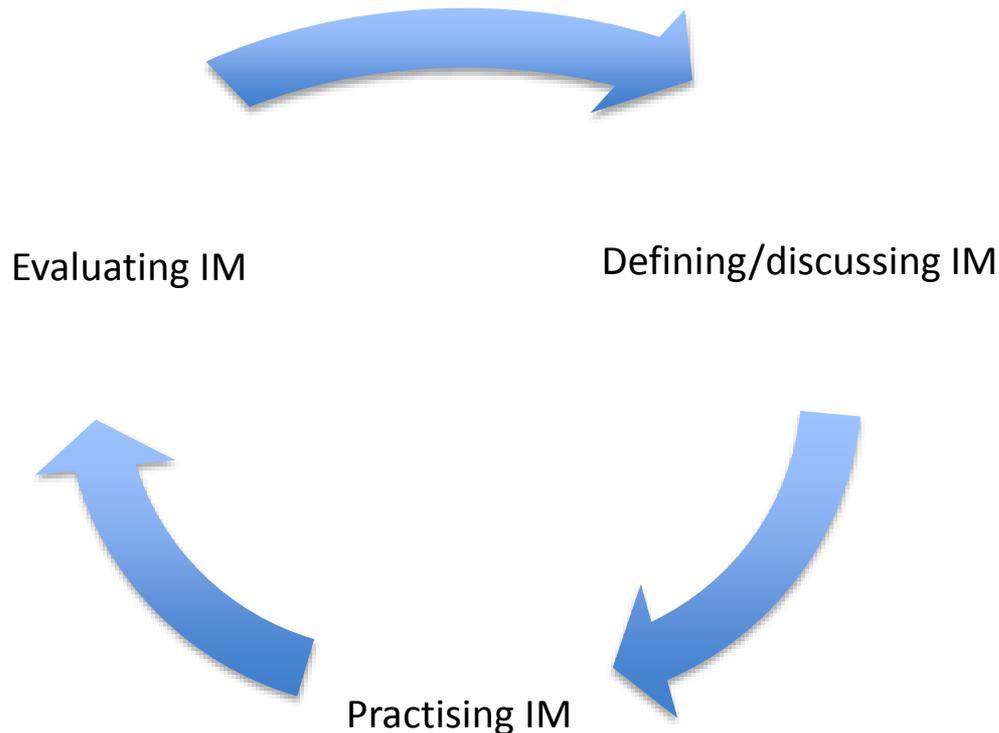


Photo credit: researcher, Tigris School on the hill (MYP)

Implications for global education

Developing IM is a journey

There is value in schools viewing IM as a journey both for the school and for its students. This journey, or process, was more important than any fixed definition to those schools involved. Importantly, each of the schools in this study were making IM their own.



Developing IM should be intentional

All of the IB World Schools involved in this study were intentionally thinking about and actively working on the conceptualisation and development of international-mindedness.

This was not something that was taken for granted or left to happen as a result of adopting an IB programme or having a diverse school population.

IM work should be sensitive to context

Each of the schools had identified its needs and created a model of IM that worked best, given their context. There is therefore a case for viewing IM practice through a lens that accepts that each school has a unique setting, and context of operation.

'All of us have been working in different schools and the scenery is completely different, you cannot talk about international mindedness the same as you speak here, as if you do in Egypt, or Jordan, or anywhere it's completely different.'
(Teacher)

Schools as role models of IM

IM is best practiced when the school as a whole acts a 'role-model' in its conceptualisation, planning, development and evaluation of IM, that is, in its IM journey.

Living International Mindedness

The schools demonstrated to students and the wider community a commitment to IM. This could be described as 'living IM' expressed through the way the members of the school community relate to and value each other and the outside world and also through the curriculum, hidden and enacted.

Reaching out reaching in

In developing IM learners benefit from opportunities to *reach out* in how they interact with others and *reach in* to understand themselves in relation to others



As IB students we need to make sure that we are well rounded. That we have knowledge on what is happening all over the world. Being internationally minded means that we take into consideration all of the worlds problems, not just the most current ones or the ones close to home. It is our responsibility to know about the people and the environment. From the melting of the polar ice caps to the Syrian migrants. From the release of greenhouse gases and deforestation, to the attacks in Paris and bombings in Lebanon.

To me being an IB student means more than just academics and a diploma at the end of the two year program. It means that we are 'world people' we can take on anything it throws at us. We care about more than just ourselves and what affects our home and we have the knowledge and skills from CAS and theory of knowledge to apply ourselves to these situations. We are being shaped into internationally minded, multicultural individuals who have the power to make a difference. To make a positive change in the world.

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<http://ibo.org/globalassets/publications/ib-research/continuum/international-mindedness-final-report-2017-en.pdf>

