



2017 Brock International  
Prize in Education Nominee

**Heleen Terwijn**

*Nominated by Mary Burns*

# Heleen Terwijn

Founder and Director: IMC Weekend  
School (Netherlands)



# Heleen Terwijn

## About Heleen and the IMC Weekend School

In 1998, Heleen Terwijn, a Dutch psychologist/psychotherapist as part of a university research study in immigrant communities in Amsterdam, found alarmingly high depression rates, a lack of future orientation, and disaffection with school among pre-teens in these communities. Profoundly impacted by what she found, Terwijn created a program to capitalize on the natural enthusiasm of children and founded the internationally acclaimed IMC Weekend School. She approached International Marketmakers Combination for funding and they became the Weekend School's first sponsor. Now, over 100 companies and foundations—not the government—fund the Weekend Schools.

Each Saturday and Sunday at the Weekend School—in 10 schools in the Netherlands, 3 in Belgium and 1 in Hong Kong—volunteer guest teachers—all professionals—teach courses in journalism, entrepreneurship, law, medicine, and philosophy to youth aged 10-14. Upon graduation from this three-year program, students join an alumni program (which is unique for Holland and Belgium) in which, among other things, they mentor young students and volunteer at the Weekend School. Research by numerous Dutch universities, some of which is attached in this portfolio, demonstrates that the Weekend School fosters future perspectives, persistence in school, and a sense of belonging to society. So successful has its been approach that it is now being adopted in the formal Dutch education system.

It's important to note that the majority of these students are low-income children of Moroccan (mainly) and Muslim immigrants. Unlike the U.S., where Muslims are quite successful, Muslims in Europe often experience social exclusion, not just in the Netherlands, but across the continent. Weekend School students come from neighborhoods where parents do not speak Dutch, where parents have little education and in many cases, low levels of literacy, where crime and drugs and poor social behavior are rampant. As

one 22 year old alumnus of the Weekend School, the son of Pakistani immigrants, who now volunteers at the Weekend School shared with me: "The Weekend School changed my life. All I ever saw was drug dealers and users. The first time I saw a lawyer at the Weekend

Figure 1: A Weekend School student in Molenbeek, Belgium works with a petrochemical engineers from ELF Total



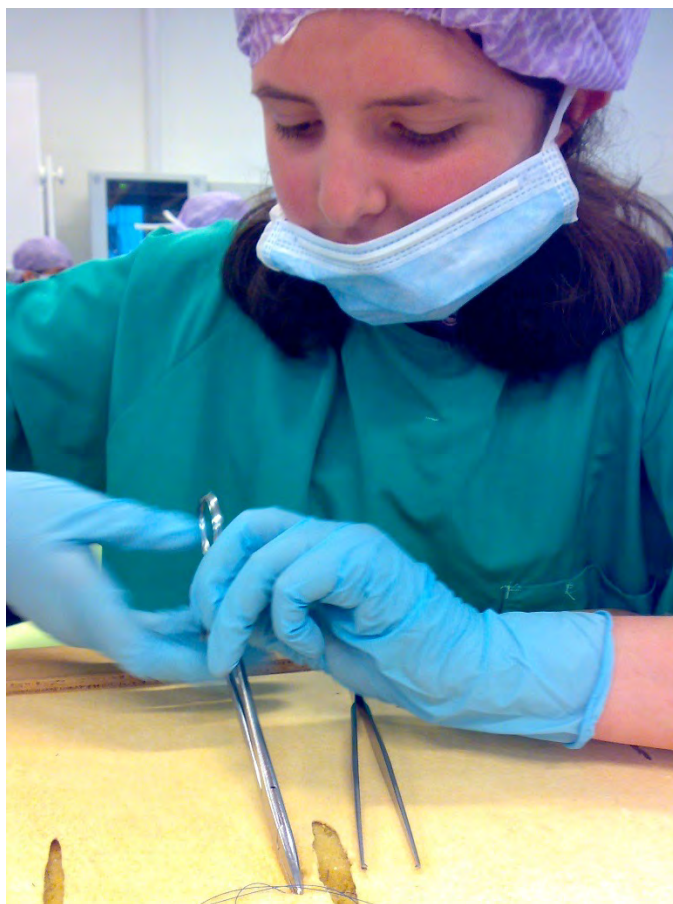
School, I was in shock. There were no lawyers in my neighborhood.” This young man now studies architecture at university. Because of its work, the Belgian government invited the the Weekend School to work in Molenbeek, Belgium, the neighborhood from where both Paris and Brussels attackers originated. Students selected for the Weekend School have often been identified as low performers or “at risk” in formal Dutch schools.

## IMC Weekend School

### Mission

The IMC Weekend School strives to prepare youth from all social classes and all school levels for wholeheartedly taking up a role in society. According to IMC Weekend School, the ability to focus one’s motivation is the highest educational outcome. To that end, Weekend School feeds youth’s natural curiosity with real-life subject matter, taught by passionate volunteer experts. In a three-year course, Weekend School enables youth to experiment with interesting options; learn to know their capacities, and develop the audacity to pursue their interests.

Figure 2: A student practices suturing techniques as part of 4-week medicine curriculum



### Vision

Weekend School education builds upon the developmental fact that all youth are motivated to explore the world. At the Weekend School, youth do not learn ‘for later,’ but learns what later is. Through experimentation with social roles in real-life contexts, Weekend School prepares students for the most significant step after their school careers: a motivated step into society.

IMC Weekend School provides extracurricular education to youth in the receptive age of 10 to 14. Each weekend, volunteer professionals teach them their jobs. The three-year program comprises academic subjects (alpha, beta, gamma), the arts, socially relevant subjects such as journalism, politics and entrepreneurship, and subjects of the students’ own choosing. Interaction between youth and guest teachers is the core of Weekend School education. Weekend School is for youth from all school levels.

After the Weekend School diploma, alumni enroll in an alumni program (IMC Alumni), now consisting of 2087 alumni. This program provides a variety

of follow-up activities, such as master classes, leadership trainings, job readiness trainings, communication skills, coaching and tutoring. IMC Alumni organizes specific activities for 18+ alumni, most notably trainings to become guest teachers for the younger generations. Weekend School alumni embody Weekend Schools’ ideals—to be well informed, motivated,

and involved citizens. While alumni networks are common in the U.S., they are not at all common in the Netherlands, and this is one of the first and the few.

Figure 3: Weekend School students serve as judge-for-a-day in a Dutch court



### **Building a Global Network**

The organization searches for social entrepreneurs who are eager to set up Weekend Schools in underprivileged neighborhoods (immigrant communities) in larger cities of Europe. Social entrepreneurs are trained at the Weekend School's headquarters in Amsterdam, and receive subsequent on-the-ground support. Social entrepreneurs are expected to organize their own fundraising and to set up their own independent organizations. As sister schools, they work with the same concept and ideals, share knowledge, and organize alumni exchanges. The Weekend School assesses potential partner's financial capacity, and conducts interviews to assess the social entrepreneurs' motivation, capacities to set up an organization, capabilities to work with the target group and develop the Weekend School concept.

## Helena Johanna (Heleen) Terwijn CV

### Education

#### 1993, Psychology, University of Amsterdam

Four-year studies in psychology, social psychology, emotion and motivation. Thesis on the emotion of shame, awarded with the National best thesis of the year award ("Het Parool / UvA Scriptieprijs 1993").

#### 2004, Psychotherapy, RINO Leiden

Four-year studies in integrative psychotherapy: psychoanalysis, cognitive/behavioral therapy, and family therapy. Work experience with (among other) post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, depression, and family therapy.

### Study groups

- 1993 – 2009, "Shame group," monthly gathering of multidisciplinary professionals for the study of the varieties and impact of shame (Founded by HT and psychoanalyst Louis Tas).
- 1993 – 2007, Monthly gatherings of the "Sociologists' society for the study of psycho and socio genesis of mentalities" (Founded by Sociology professor Abram de Swaan).
- 2010 – present, member of ISRE, International Society for Research on Emotion.

### Work

#### 1994 – 1997, Researcher, University of Amsterdam, Social Psychology

Grants from the State Secretary of Education, and the 'Fund for Social Studies.' Studies into motivation of youth in the first large immigrant neighborhood in Amsterdam. Following this study: founding of IMC Weekend School.

1997 - present Founder and director of IMC Weekend School.

### Current Supervisory Positions (not for profit)

- Supervisory board (secretary) Save the Children, the Netherlands, 2011-present
- Chairwoman, "Jongeren Die het Kunnen" (*Youth that Can*), an organization founded by Weekend School alumna Virgil Tevreden for the empowerment of youth with low IQ and behavioral problems, 2012-present
- Vice-chair, supervisory board, "Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest" (Dutch Philharmonic Orchestra), 2011-present

### Other

- Since 2004, Fellow of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. ("The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan").
- 2004 GMF Fellowship for Young European Leaders; study tour throughout the United States.
- 2006 GMF Study Grant for the study of American initiatives to combat social exclusion.
- 2009-2014 Member of the Dutch committee for the selection of GMF fellows (Young Dutch Leaders).

- 2000 – present: Advisor to a wide variety of institutions, family foundations and individuals for setting up or supporting social initiatives.
- Since 2009, Member of the “Amsterdamsche Kring” (founded May 1945), a group of prominent Amsterdam citizens committed to strengthening the city and its surroundings.

### **Awards Founder/Director IMC Weekend School**

- 2003 Edgar Donckers Prize for Dutch Cultural Integration.
- 2009 Winner at the Marketplace of Ideas, United Nations, Alliance of Civilizations.
- 2010 Finalist WISE Awards, World Innovation Summit for Education.
- 2011 Ziggo Prize for the Open Society.
- 2013 “Hélène de Montigny Prijs,” irregularly awarded prize for “a person that according to a commission under chairmanship of the Rector Magnificus of the University of Amsterdam has exceptionally contributed to mankind in general.”
- 2014 Knighthood, “Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau.”

Figure 4: Weekend School student meets with an entrepreneur







*[E-mail from Dutch Minister of Education to Heleen Terwijn, July 26, 2016, explaining that as a Minister she cannot send a letter of recommendation, and underscoring the importance of Heleen's work]. [Translated from the Dutch by IMC Weekend School].*

Dear Heleen Terwijn,

Herewith, I wholeheartedly congratulate you with your nomination for the 'Brock Prize.' Unfortunately, as a Minister I cannot write a letter of recommendation, unless it concerns a State Prize. But through this message, I'd like to ensure you the following:

As Minister of Education, the gap between children with higher and lower Social Economic Status is of growing concern to me - a gap that in our knowledge and technology driven society is at risk of widening. Unfortunately, also in the Netherlands.

I am deeply convinced that education should not establish or even widen this gap but bridge it. Not as the big equalizer but as the place where all youth gets the maximum opportunity to develop to the fullest of their capacities, and to become who they would want to be.

This asks for teachers that are highly capable of dealing with differences among children in the classroom, and do not act upon 'implicit bias.'

This asks for safeguarding flexible transitions between school levels, in order to ensure that all students, at all moments in their school careers can re-invent themselves.

This asks for schools with a vision that capitalise on excellent coaching and conditions to maximise all students' capacities.

And (since schools cannot achieve this alone) this also asks for social and private initiatives that help disadvantaged youth to build social networks, to develop the skills that they need to proceed in society, and to develop future perspectives - even if they do not develop these naturally in their home situations.

Your Weekend School is such a beautiful initiative. An initiative that started small and is spreading widely, because it works so well. An initiative that I fully support because it can fundamentally change youngsters' lives, contributes to equal chances for all youth, and thus brings more justice and social connectedness to our society.

As far as I am concerned (and I will follow this up in my policy), initiatives like yours are indispensable and should be strengthened and imitated.

I sincerely hope that you win the prize, because that would be a more than just recognition for your fantastic work.

Best of luck and goodbye!

With best regards,

Minister Jet Bussemaker



*Embassy of the United States of America*

The Hague, the Netherlands

July 15, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to let you know that we strongly support the recommendation of Ms. Heleen Terwijn for the Brock International Prize in Education. Ms. Terwijn is a longstanding contact of the U.S. Embassy in the Netherlands and we have developed a close working relationship with her IMC Weekendschool over the years.

Ms. Terwijn's initiative to enable children from underprivileged communities to develop the necessary tools to not only succeed, but thrive in Dutch society is something we strongly value and support at the Embassy. This kind of private educational initiative is rare in the Netherlands where education is centralized. Heleen Terwijn observed that children from immigrant and low-income communities encounter substantial barriers in their young lives that most primary and high schools do not sufficiently address. She had the courage, vision, and energy to do something about it 18 years ago, recognizing that actions speak louder than words.

The IMC Weekendschool has grown over the years and currently has 10 schools around the Netherlands and more than 1,800 alumni. We recently hosted a group of IMC Weekendschool "ambassadors," who are leaders among the alumni group, to discuss how to raise awareness of and support for the program among potential students and donors. We also selected three young women ambassadors to participate in a women's leadership program in Boston this summer.

Studies have shown that students from low-income households face significant barriers that persist through their school years, and as they become adults, they typically earn less than their peers and are at greater risk for health problems and crime. With the IMC Weekendschool, Heleen Terwijn is fighting to overcome these risks, improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable Dutch citizens.

It has been a great pleasure to get to know Heleen Terwijn and her staff over the years. We believe she is a perfect fit for the Brock International Prize in Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam H. Sterling".

Adam H. Sterling  
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim

ING Nederland fonds

Amsterdam, July 29th, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to show you my support of the recommendation of Heleen Terwijn for the Brock International Prize in Education

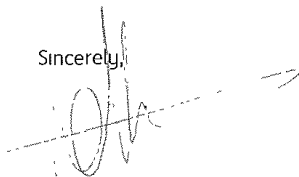
I have become acquainted with Heleen Terwijn through the long term partnership between the IMC Weekendschool and my organization, the *ING Nederland fonds*. And see the inspiring, innovative and trailblazing role she plays in the field of education.

The mission of the *ING Nederland fonds* is to empower citizens and organizations that take initiative to strengthen Dutch society. We believe in the power of people, their impactful role in society and ability to bring positive change. The *ING Nederland fonds* supports people with plans and ambitions to help build a stronger and better society. Heleen Terwijn's mission to enable children to prosper is a great example of that and we support her fully.

*ING Nederland Fonds* recently facilitated the biyearly Weekend School alumni & partner event held at Nyenrode Business University. A day full of inspiration, interaction and pride. On this day the alumni return to the Weekend School platform to meet old friends, interact with the network of the Weekend School and inspire the younger generation of alumni. On this day people from different backgrounds, cultures and age groups come together determined to build a better, more tolerant society, one of which we can all be proud.

People like Heleen Terwijn are key to developing a more just, equal and positive society. Heleen Terwijn has devoted a great deal of her time to stimulate social cohesion, build a better future and has influenced the lives of thousands of children in the past years. We fully endorse Heleen Terwijn and consider her the candidate for the Brock International Prize in Education.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Ottens  
Directeur ING Nederland fonds

# Weekend School in the News

## 1. Volkskrant, De Bron, interview with IMC Alumnus Virgil Tevreden (April 4, 2016)



“Boxing forward” (page 2)

‘De Bron’ is a column in De Volkskrant, one of the most renowned Dutch newspapers. The column asks people about who inspired them. For IMC Alumnus Virgil Tevreden, this was Heleen Terwijn.

Virgil was among Heleen’s first Weekend School students. Inspired by her enthusiasm, he now runs a non-profit organization for sport activities for young people with behavioral issues and/or a mental disorder. In the column, Virgil states that it was crucial Heleen gave him the feeling it was ok to make mistakes – that he was worth making an effort for. This has inspired him to invest in this youth himself.

## **2. NRC Handelsblad, Summary Weekend School Research (May 7, 2013)**

*"This school says: you can do this too"* (page 3)

In 2013, IMC Weekend School in association with UvA (University of Amsterdam) conducted an extensive research, investigating the effects of Weekend School Education. NRC Handelsblad, one of The Netherlands' larger newspapers, wrote an article on the outcome. The research showed Weekend School students are more confident than non Weekend School peers, have a better knowledge of the professional world, have a more substantiated idea of what profession they would like to pursue, and are able to name more of their qualities.

# Deze school zegt: jij kunt dit óók



Vrijwilligers die kinderen vertellen over hun beroep en hen stimuleren vóóder te kijken. Weekendschool werkt, zo bleek deze week uit onderzoek.

**Door onze redacteur YASMINA ABOU TALEB**  
AMSTERDAM. Verspreid over heel Nederland krijgen 900 kinderen elke zondag les van vrijwilligers met bijzondere of alledaagse beroepen als architect, sterrenkundige of verpleger. Ze vertellen over hun werk. En proberen kinderen te enthousiasmeren vóóder te kijken. De school wordt gefinancierd door giften van bedrijven als SNS en IMC. Voor de kinderen is de school gratis.

De formule van de school, vijftien jaar geleden begonnen in de Amsterdamse Bijlmer, wordt alom geprezen door politici. Maar, levert het ook wat op? De school deed, met hulp van de Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), onderzoek naar de effectiviteit van weekendscholing bij kinderen uit achterstandswijken. Kinderen uit dezelfde klassen zijn drie jaar lang gemonitord. De helft ging naar de weekendschool, de andere helft niet. Afgelopen week werden de uitkomsten gepresenteerd: kinderen van de weekendschool blijken zelfverzekerder.

Het regulier onderwijs gaat ervan uit dat kinderen ook buiten school veel leren over de samenleving. „Maar dat is helaas niet altijd zo”, zegt Heleen Terwijn, oprichter en directeur. „Ik vond het raar dat scholen leerlingen niet voorbereiden op hun toekomst na het diploma. Via echte professionals die met plezier iets doen. Dat is een groot gemis. Van gemotiveerde vakexperts leer je over de wereld. En je leert vaardigheden, zoals zelfvertrouwen en lef om op mensen af te stappen.”

Het doel van de weekendschool is kinderen te motiveren, dingen met plezier doen. De school probeert dat op allerlei manieren te bevorderen. „Allereerst stimuleren we zelfvertrouwen”, zegt Terwijn, „door te zeggen: jij kunt dit ook, stel vragen, niks is gek. Ten tweede laten we toekomstperspectieven zien. Welke beroepen zijn er? Wat houden die in? En ook: Wat vind ik leuk? Wat past bij me? En tenslotte stimuleren we sociale verbondenheid. Dat is een lastig concept, maar wij hebben dat in het onderzoek vertaald naar burgerschap; dat je je bewust bent van jouw rol in de samenleving. Je moet relaties kunnen leggen en je kunnen verhouden tot anderen.”

IMC Weekendschool verwachtte, dat kinderen die naar de weekendschool gaan, op deze gebieden meer 'groeien' dan andere kinderen. Die verwachting blijkt op veel punten uitgekomen. Weekendschoolkinderen hebben meer kennis over beroepen en kunnen beter zeggen waarom ze iets willen worden. Ze zijn ook zelfverzekerder; kunnen meer kwaliteiten van zichzelf benoemen en ze noemen zichzelf minder vaak dom.

„Wél vreemd is”, zegt Terwijn, „dat kinderen van de weekendschool niet vaker of beter hun talenten aan een beroep kunnen koppelen. Waar dat aanligt, weten we niet. Misschien komt dat door de jonge leeftijd, of misschien hebben we niet de juiste vragen gesteld. Daar zouden we meer onderzoek naar moeten doen.”

De vraag rijst wel waarom de school zelf het onderzoek heeft ge-

## Achterstandskinderen leren vaak te weinig buiten schooltijd



Op de weekendschool gaan kinderen vaak op excursie, bijvoorbeeld naar de rechtbank waar ze rollenspelletjes spelen als advocaat of rechter, of naar de kookfabriek waar ze met professionele koks desserts bereiden. Fotos HH

daan, in plaats van het te laten uitvoeren door een onafhankelijk onderzoeksbureau. Terwijn: „Om de onafhankelijkheid te vergroten hebben we de UvA erbij betrokken. Studenten hebben samen met onze mensen de data verzameld. De data-analyse was onder supervisie van een socioloog. We willen niet frauderen, we willen weten hoe het zit. Maar we zorgen ook voor transparantie: iedereen kan langskomen om ons onderzoek te bekijken.”

Dergelijk onderzoek is niet eerder gedaan. Terwijn denkt wél te weten waardoor dat komt. „Onderzoek naar aanvullend onderwijs, zoals een *summer school*, beslaat vaak een korte periode en is gericht op andere onderwerpen, vooral het wegwerken van achterstanden op het gebied van taal en rekenen. De onderzochte kinderen van IMC Weekendschool, ruim 700, zijn 2,5 jaar gevolgd op psychologische factoren. Wat dat betreft, is dit onderzoek uniek in onderwerp en omvang.”

Terwijn hoopt dat anderen door dit onderzoek gestimuleerd worden meer met haar manier van lesgeven te gaan doen. Dat begint ook al op gang te komen. Terwijn werkt sinds kort samen met een school in Zaandam die dit op vrijdagmiddag op proef doet. „Hopelijk slaat het aan”, zegt Terwijn. „Wij doen het nu voor de kinderen die dit het hardst nodig hebben, maar alle kinderen zouden er baat bij hebben.”

### 'Ik vond het leger vet spannend'

**Arnia Bahman (17), uit Utrecht**

„De keer dat we met IMC Weekendschool naar een open dag van het leger gingen, zal ik niet snel vergeten. Ik was euforisch en ik vond het leger vet spannend. Er was een show van tanks en helikopters. Dat maakte veel indruk op me. Daar maakte ik ook mijn eerste vrije val. Uit een vliegtuig springen zonder ergens aan vast te zitten, dat was echt een kick.”

„Ik was een druk jongetje. Dat was niet altijd makkelijk voor mijn leraren op IMC Weekendschool. Ik luisterde niet, schold veel. Ik gebruikte vaak het woord kanker en ik schold vrienden uit voor flitsker. Echt een bully. In die tijd ging het slecht

thuis; jeugdzorg kwam vaak langs, mijn ouders gingen scheiden. Een stressvolle periode.

„De docenten van de weekendschool stimuleerden me om door te zetten en mijn diploma te halen. Ik ben blij dat ik heb doorgezet. Het geeft een goed gevoel iets te hebben afgemaakt, want daarna zakke ik ook van havo/wo naar mavo. Mijn leven is nu veel rustiger. Ik ben veel aardiger geworden, niet meer zoals toen. Nu gaaf ik street-danceles aan kinderen, zit ik op een sportcollege waar ik mijn energie kwijt kan. Maar ik ga, denk ik, van studie veranderen. Ik ben goed in Engels. Het internationale bedrijfsleven lijkt me wel wat. Dan kun je reizen en verdienen je veel geld.”

### 'Ik kreeg een medaille van Wouter Bos'

**Biera Açıkgöz (17), uit Amsterdam**

„Ik keek vroeger erg uit naar de zondagen. Ik vond het verschrikkelijk dat de weekendschool na drie jaar stopte. Het was daar altijd zo gezellig. Het voelde helemaal niet als school. We leerden wel, maar we mochten zoveel doen.

„We mochten zelf vakken kiezen. Zo leerde ik dat het goed is om te zeggen wat je wilt, zodat je dingen kan doen die je leuk vindt. „Ik kwam erachter dat veel gastdocenten met leuke beroepen daar helemaal niet voor gestudeerd hadden. Ze hadden vaak een brede opleiding gedaan. Daarom heb ik voor de studie financieel-administratief medewerker gekozen. Later

wil ik mijn eigen modezaak en dan kan ik die opleiding goed gebruiken.

„De leukste les op de weekendschool was politiek. Wouter Bos kwam met ons debatteren. Na afloop kreeg ik een medaille van hem, omdat hij mij de beste vond. Dat vond ik echt geweldig. Ik wist helemaal niet dat ik dat kon!

„Ook nadat ik mijn diploma heb behaald, deed de weekendschool veel voor me. Ik kon namelijk geen stageplek vinden, dus ik vroeg de weekendschool om hulp. Ze boden me een plek op hun kantoor in het WTC aan. Daar was ik heel blij mee. Ik leerde hoeveel werk het is de zondagen voor de kinderen voor te bereiden en dat er echt een professionele kant aan zit.”

### 'Ik durf nu op mensen af te stappen'

**Ömerfaruk Susurlu (19), uit Amsterdam**

„Op dag één van IMC Weekendschool leer je eigenlijk al hoe belangrijk het is om een netwerk te hebben en te onderhouden. We ontmoeten zoveel mensen – later kun je ze nog nodig hebben. De meeste banen worden tenslotte gevuld via netwerken. „Via de weekendschool ontmoette ik de directeur van Shell en de directeur van het AMC-ziekenhuis. Grote mannen, die ik anders niet ontmoet had. We zijn zelfs bij Máxima op bezoek geweest. Door deze ontmoetingen ben ik sociaal geworden, heb ik meer lef gekregen. Nu durf ik gewoon op mensen af te stappen en om een kaartje

te vragen. Laats kwam ik iemand van radiostation FunX tegen, ik heb meteen gevraagd of kinderen van de weekendschool een keer langs konden komen in de studio. Dat had ik eest niet gedurfd, dank ik.

„Op de weekendschool maakte ik ook nieuwe vrienden. Zoals Mohamed. Hij is begonnen op het vmbo en hij gaat nu naar de universiteit. Echt goed van hem. Dat is inspirerend. Ik wil ook doorstuderen. Ik doe nu mbo e-technologie, een soort elektrotechniek. Het is heel interessant en ik weet nu al dat ik een baan heb als ik afgestudeerd ben. Maar ik wil doorstuderen, rechten doen, en uiteindelijk straf-rechter worden. Dat is mijn droom.”

### **3. Algemeen Dagblad, Portraits of Four Rotterdam Alumni and Their Ambitions (July 5, 2016)**

*"Having ambition is normal"* (page 4-5)

Algemeen Dagblad is in the top three most read Dutch newspapers. The main message of this article is that there is not necessary a correlation between where you come from, and where you're going. The four alumni in this article, all raised in disadvantaged neighborhoods, have big dreams.

At IMC Weekend School, Jermaine learned about what the world has to offer and now studies ICT management. He plans on applying for university and hopes to obtain an internship in the United States.

Sonata was able to nurture her curiosity to learn and overcome her shyness at the Weekend School, to the extent of speaking at two charity dinners.

Seda was so intrigued by Medicine and the excursions to the hospital, it motivated her to study medicine at the university.

Stephanie tells us the Weekend School taught her self-presentation, and showed her a world that would otherwise have remained invisible to her.

# AMBITIES HEBBEN IS normaal

Het feit dat hun vader of moeder relatief vaak schoonmaker is, wil nog niet zeggen dat kinderen uit achterstandswijken ook voorbestemd zijn voor de zwabber. Al 10 jaar richt de IMC Weekendschool zich in de Rotterdamse wijk Delfshaven op enthousiaste kinderen met honger naar kennis. Om hen te laten zien dat de wereld meer te bieden heeft.

TEKST YVONNE KEUNEN • FOTOS JAN DE GROEN

Het is zondagmiddag en een Turks gezin loopt opgetogen de statige witte trap af van het Onderwijscentrum van het Erasmus MC in Rotterdam, dat onderdak biedt aan de weekendschool. Ze zijn feestelijk gekleed, op de jurk van de zichtbaar trotse dochter zijn ballonnen gespeld. Het meisje is één van de 28 kinderen van de IMC Weekendschool Rotterdam Delfshaven die zojuist hun diploma hebben gekregen. Niet uit handen van de burgemeester, zoals geregeld gebeurt. Ahmed Aboutaleb had het dit weekeinde te druk met voetbalzaken en sprak daarom een videoboodschap in. Rector magnificus Huibert Pols van de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam had wel tijd om diploma's uit te reiken. En dat is toch ook een voornaam man, hoofd bovendien van de universiteit die over een paar jaar misschien wel lonkt.

Duizend leerlingen tussen 10 en 14 jaar vol-

gen 3 jaar lang elke zondag les op een van de tien weekendschoolvestigingen in Nederland. Niet omdat ze bijscholing nodig hebben, maar omdat ze zo leergierig zijn. En omdat ze bepaalde vaardigheden, algemene kennis of een rolmodel missen die hen kunnen helpen om een beroep te vinden dat ze écht leuk vinden.

Op de IMC Weekendschool, vernoemd naar het handelshuis dat de instelling mede mogelijk maakt, worden op vrijwillige basis gastlessen gegeven door rechters, chirurgen, schrijvers, filosofen of advocaten. Zij vinden dat vaak zo leuk om te doen, dat ze elk jaar weer terugkomen. Ook staan educatieve en culturele uitstapjes op het programma.

Leerlingen zien op de weekendschool welke beroepen en studies er allemaal zijn. Ook is het stimuleren van het zelfvertrouwen een belangrijk onderdeel van de zondagslessen. En het werkt. De leerlingen hebben meer algemene kennis dan andere leeftijdsgeno-

ten uit probleemwijken, blijkt uit een gezamenlijk onderzoek van de weekendschool en de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Ze hebben meer kennis over beroepen en kunnen beter uitleggen waarom ze iets willen worden. Ook zijn ze zelfverzekender, hebben een grotere woordenschat en weten meer over politiek dan hun klasgenoten die niet naar de weekendschool gaan. En dat is precies wat psycholoog Heleen Terwijn voor ogen had toen ze de weekendschool oprichtte. Terwijn deed onderzoek naar jongeren in de Amsterdamse Bijlmer en ontdekte dat ze in een paar jaar tijd hun toekomststromen verliezen. Het was de aanzet van haar missie om jongeren hun enthousiasme te laten behouden. Want, stelt Terwijn, ambities hebben is normaal. Ook in wijken die te boek staan als probleembuurt. Dat bewijzen de vier oudleerlingen van het eerste uur van de weekendschool in Delfshaven. Lees hieronder hun verhalen.



## JERMAINE GIEDHARIESING (19)

'Ik wil in Amerika stage lopen en mij daar misschien ook vestigen'

„Ik was de eerste in de familie die naar de weekendschool ging. Daarna heb ik mijn broertje er warm voor gemaakt en nu zit ook mijn zusje erop. In groep 6 van de basisschool kreeg ik een presentatie en het leek me heel interessant. Ook mijn ouders hebben mij erg gemotiveerd om te gaan.

Ik vond de vakken die aan bod komen heel leuk. En ook kom je op plekken waar je normaal gesproken niet komt, zoals een operatiekamer, de Tweede Kamer of de gevangenis. Daar ben ik echt even opgesloten in een oel. We zijn ook een keer pannenkoeken gaan eten met mensen van de Rabobank die ons uitgebreid hebben verteld over het bankwezen. Wat veel indruk op me heeft gemaakt is een bezoek aan het AD. Ik heb namelijk altijd al



▲ Jermaine is altijd al een bezige bij geweest.

iets willen doen met media, of iets met technologie en ct. Dat is door de weekendschool niet veranderd, maar ik heb daar wel gezien wat ik niet wilde. Je maakt er kennis met wat de wereld nog meer te bieden heeft. Ik ben altijd ondernemend geweest, ben bijna root thuis, ik studeer ict management op de hogeschool en als ik daarmee klaar ben, ga ik naar de universiteit. Daarnaast heb ik de radiostations Parbo FM en Raw FM en heb ik een design- en ICT-bedrijf. Mijn droom is naar het buitenland te gaan. Ik wil stage lopen in Amerika

en me daar misschien vestigen. Suriname is ook een optie. Daar heb ik al een bedrijfje en ik ben Hindostaans. Maar ik vind het land ook wel erg warm, een iets koeler land lijkt me fijner om te wonen."

## SONATA GOGAR (19)

'Onlangs heb ik nog een voordracht gehouden op twee benefietdiners'

„Van kind af aan ben ik altijd heel ijverig geweest. Ik maakte trouw mijn huiswerk, maar daar mee was ik op zaterdagmiddag wel klaar. Dan kwam de zondag en verveelde ik me. Dus toen ik van de weekendschool in Delfshaven hoorde, wilde ik daar heel graag heen.

Op de weekendschool mag je heel veel dingen, die je normaal niet doet. Ik vond het bijvoorbeeld heel leuk om een keer naar de rechtbank te gaan. Die ging speciaal voor ons open op zondag. Ik mocht een toga aan en meedoen aan een rolspel in de rechtszaal. Ook de journalistiek kwam aan bod en dat vind ik een interessant vak. Ik ben heel nieuwsgierig en wil altijd weten waarom dingen gaan zoals ze gaan. Op de weekendschool heb ik echt leren



▲ Sonata verveelde zich altijd op zondag.

doorvragen en heb ik ook geleerd om mezelf goed te presenteren. Dat vond ik in het begin doodzwaar, ik was vroeger namelijk vertegenwoordiger, maar nu niet meer. Omdat ik het altijd zo leuk heb gevonden, ben ik ambassadeur geworden van de IMC Weekendschool Delfshaven. Bij de laatste diploma-uitreiking in het faculteitsgebouw van het Erasmus MC heb ik nog een voordracht gehouden. Ook heb ik onlangs gesproken bij een benefietdiner van Quota Rotterdam, een netwerk van vrouwelijke professionals, en in Den Haag bij een diner voor de ambassadeurs van de IMC Weekendschool in Nederland. Dat vind ik leuk om te doen en ik leer er veel van. Ik ben heel dankbaar voor alle kansen die ik nu nog krijg van de weekendschool."



#### **4. Stadsnieuws Tilburg, Six Role Models (February 2 and 24, 2016)**

*"The Weekend School makes everything real"* (page 6-11)

Four branches celebrated their ten year anniversary in 2016. Tilburg was one of them and celebrated with a role model campaign: over six Saturdays, six alumni appeared in the local newspaper with their stories. The posters they're holding were also displayed in bus stops throughout Tilburg.

All six of them agree IMC Weekend School gave them great opportunities. Role model Maryem met Adam Sterling on the Embassy of the United States in The Hague: "Kennedy is my hero, and Sterling had just returned from his daughter. Isn't that amazing? Especially if you realize this means I'm only one handshake away from Obama!" Or as Oussama says: "What other young person gets the opportunity to pick up a huge telescope and study the sun on a regular Sunday?"





L'ASBL TOEKOMSTATELIERDELAVERNIR (TADA) S'AGRANDIT

# Les médiateurs bruxellois

**BRUXELLES L'ASBL Atelier de l'Avenir, une ASBL dont le but est d'élargir les horizons des enfants bruxellois issus des quartiers difficiles, s'étend. Après la commune de Saint-Josse, c'est à Cureghem que des cours sont donnés le samedi. En janvier, ce sera à la commune de Molenbeek de prendre part au projet. « En inspirant les gens, nous espérons mettre en place une dynamique. »**



PH. TADA

« Notre objectif est, d'ici 2020, de passer la barre des 1.000 enfants. » Il y a trois ans, Sofie Foets fondait l'association Toekomst Atelier de l'Avenir (TADA). Cette ASBL bruxelloise donne l'occasion à des enfants de 10 à 14 ans, vivant dans la précarité, d'aller à la rencontre d'une profession. TADA espère ainsi élargir leur vision du monde du travail afin que plus tard, ils puissent faire les bons choix professionnels. Sofie Foets s'est inspirée du projet IMC Weekendschool créé au Pays-Bas. Dans l'école primaire Sint-Joost-aan-Zee à Saint-Josse où elle nous reçoit, Sofie Foets nous explique qu'en trois ans, l'association a abordé de nombreux sujets autour de thèmes variés tels que la création, la technologie, les sciences et la société. « Cela a permis de donner aux enfants un large aperçu des différents métiers qui existent. » Des professionnels bénévoles venant de tous les secteurs du marché du travail viennent expliquer aux enfants en quoi consiste leur métier. Notre but n'est pas de susciter des vocations, ni même d'inciter les jeunes à se lancer dans de grandes études mais juste de leur donner une chance de réaliser plus tard ce qui leur convient le mieux dans une branche où ils pourraient s'épanouir. »

UN PROGRAMME SUR

## TROIS ANS

Toutes les professions sont envisagées. Des avocats, des juristes mais aussi agents de police, gardiens de la paix ou greffiers viennent animer des ateliers. « Nous voulons que nos jeunes soient des citoyens informés et actifs », déclare Foets. Les résultats scolaires n'entrent absolument pas en compte pour décrocher une place à un atelier de l'ASBL. Seulement deux conditions sont requises : que les enfants y participent volontairement et qu'ils s'engagent à venir tous les samedis de l'année scolaire pendant trois ans.

« Dans la commune de Saint-Josse, la demande pour participer aux ateliers est sans cesse grandissante. Pour une place libre, nous recevons trois demandes. Entre les enfants qui souhaitent vraiment venir et ceux qui en ont réellement besoin, nous devons faire des choix. Lors de ces ateliers, nous veillons toujours à garder un équilibre entre le nombre de filles et de garçons. On essaie aussi de mélanger les enfants qui viennent d'écoles différentes. Ceux qui ont le plus besoin sont

prioritaires. Un enfant qui va dans une école de musique n'a pas besoin de TADA. »

## UNE PETITE FAMILLE

Sofie Foets admet que le projet peut être bénéfique à tous les enfants. Néanmoins, l'ASBL a choisi de s'adresser en priorité à des enfants qui sont confrontés à la précarité. « Ce sont pour la majorité des jeunes provenant de milieux socio-économiques fragiles et qui n'ont pas ou quasi pas accès à des activités extrascolaires centrées sur l'empowerment. »

« Un enfant sur trois, à Bruxelles, naît dans la pauvreté. Nous avons donc encore beaucoup de pain sur la planche », nous dit-elle. La plupart des enfants de l'association ont des parents issus de l'immigration. « La commune de Saint-Josse connaît un brassage culturel important et a des besoins spécifiques. Si TADA décidait un jour de s'installer dans le quartier des Marolles, les challenges seraient peut-être tout à fait différents. »

Les réactions sont très positives. « Au début, certains parents étaient un peu méfiants. Mais

cette méfiance à très vite fait place à de la reconnaissance et voire même à de la fierté. Les parents sont contents de constater l'enthousiasme et la soif d'apprendre de leurs progénitures. TADA encourage aussi les parents à s'impliquer en les invitant à assister à un cours, en organisant des rencontres de parents d'élèves ou des visites à domicile. »

« Après trois ans, nous avons réussi à construire une véritable relation de confiance. On peut même dire aujourd'hui qu'après trois ans, certaines familles nous considèrent comme étant des leurs. Du coup, notre réseau social s'est agrandi. »

## COURRIER DES PROFESSEURS

Sofie Foets reçoit souvent des lettres de remerciement de professeurs reconnaissants-leurs élèves « sont désormais capables de se projeter au-delà des Tours du quartier Madou » ou d'écoles parce qu'elles souhaitent aussi prendre part au projet. « Les établissements scolaires de ces quartiers font un travail de titan. Les enseignants doivent apprendre aux enfants beaucoup de choses et disposent de très peu de temps pour le faire. En dehors de l'apprentissage de base, comme la lecture et les mathématiques, les enfants doivent aussi acquérir en parallèle des compétences transversales, compétences que leurs parents ne sont pas toujours en mesure de leur transmettre. C'est là que nous intervenons. Nous leur donnons un petit coup de pouce. »

TADA n'a pas juste vocation d'élargir la vision du monde de ces enfants. « Nous leur apprenons beaucoup plus. Comme le fait que l'on compte sur eux et que s'ils sont absents, ils doivent nous en avvertir. » Cela va vraiment au-delà d'une simple question de discipline. Sofie Foets nous apprend que par le billet d'un apprentissage actif, les jeunes apprennent à mettre des mots sur des idées, à s'exprimer

en public et que par effet ricochet, les parents de ces jeunes disent aussi avoir appris de nouvelles choses sur notre société.

Sophie Foets nous raconte aussi l'histoire de cet adolescent qui l'a remercié juste après un cours de chimie parce qu'il ne savait pas que la science, c'était ça. « Ce qui est évident pour nous ne l'est pas forcément pour eux. »

## ALUMNI

Entre-temps, une quarantaine d'élèves TADA-alumni sont arrivés au terme du programme de trois ans. L'un d'entre eux, Soulaïmane, est actuellement en deuxième secondaire. Il a choisi l'option latin-grec. « La première fois que j'ai entendu parler de TADA, cela ne m'intéressait absolument pas mais je me suis quand même inscrit. J'ai tout de suite accroché. »

Selon lui, les ateliers les plus passionnants étaient les ateliers photo, théâtre et droit. Mais au final, aucun des métiers présentés ne l'attirait.

Soulaïmane veut devenir chirurgien cardiaque. Il rêve aussi d'être acteur. Aujourd'hui, tous les samedis, il est bénévole dans l'ASBL. TADA veut se focaliser sur Bruxelles jusqu'en 2020. « Si nous arrivons à aider 1.000 familles et qu'en parallèle plusieurs milliers de bénévoles se joignent à notre ASBL, alors seulement nous serons en mesure de créer des ponts entre des mondes voués à ne jamais se croiser », déclare Sofie Foets. « J'espère que nous serons les instigateurs d'une nouvelle dynamique à Bruxelles qui permettra aux gens de se parler à nouveau, de se découvrir et que d'autres s'en inspirent. Nous n'avons pas la solution, mais grâce à TADA tout le monde a la possibilité d'amener sa pierre à l'édifice. »

Eldrid Deleu

*TADA ne bénéficie d'aucun subside et existe grâce à des dons. Si vous aimez, vous souhaitez soutenir ce projet, allez sur [www.toekomstatelierdelavenir.be](http://www.toekomstatelierdelavenir.be)*

## À quoi ressemble une journée chez TADA ?

Eldrid Deleu, notre journaliste, a passé un samedi chez TADA comme invitée d'honneur. Avec quatre autres journalistes professionnels, elle a expliqué au cours de sa conférence de presse. Elle raconte son expérience.

**9h45** : Maarti de chez TADA parcourt avec ses cinq professeurs du jour le programme scolaire de l'école Sint-Joost-aan-Zee.

**11h00** : La sonnerie retentit. Le cours commence. Les enfants viennent nous chercher pour nous conduire vers notre classe.

**11h10** : Chaque journaliste se présente. Nous avons tous préparé un sujet. J'ai emporté mon dictaphone.

**11 h25** : La classe est divisée en quatre. Mon groupe et moi allons voir à quoi ressemble une réunion à la rédaction d'un journal. Mes six journalistes en herbe reçoivent une carte de presse officielle qu'ils devront montrer pour pouvoir assister à une conférence de presse. Ils reçoivent aussi un communiqué factice de la ministre flamande de l'Éducation Hilde Crevost.

**11h40** : La conférence de presse commence. Je joue



PH. TADA

le rôle de la ministre et j'annonce que dorénavant la mixité sera supprimée de toutes les écoles de Belgique. La raison de cette mesure est que les élèves obtiendraient de moins bons résultats lorsqu'ils ne sont pas séparés. Lors de la conférence de presse, Stef Vankansen du Centre pour l'égalité des

chances et Brigitte Bauwens sont présents. Danny Peeters, le père de jumaux, Ronny et Kimberley, est là aussi. Il espère être entendu.

Les questions fusent. Je m'aperçois que les enfants éprouvent parfois des difficultés à exprimer ce qu'ils pensent. Il ne faut pas très longtemps pour s'apercevoir qu'ils ne sont pas d'accord avec la ministre et qu'ils prennent le parti du papa.

**12h30** : Pause.

**13h30** : Avec mes six journalistes, je réalise une synthèse du point de vue de Stef Vankansen. Alihan relit une petite partie du texte que nous avons préparé un peu plus tôt juste avant de passer devant la caméra.

**13h35** : Même chose avec d'autres enfants. Inversion des rôles. Les enfants entrent avec une facilité déconcertante dans la peau des personnalités.

**14h20** : Le professeur invite Thijs a filmé la conférence de presse du matin. Tous ensemble, nous visionnons le petit film où des élèves présentent le journal télévisé.

**14h30** : Le cours est fini. Tous les enfants viennent nous saluer en nous serrant la main. Nous recevons une carte et du chocolat.

## **7. L'Avenir, Rendez-vous with the future (TADA) (October 12, 2015)**

*"Rendez-vous with the future"* (page 14)

An article in French news paper l'Avenir summarizes the goals of TADA during a cooking class, in which the children learn all there is to know about restaurants and hospitality. TADA is run by Sofie Foets, shown on the photo in the red square.

# Rendez-vous avec le futur

Avec l'ASBL TADA, des enfants issus de quartiers socialement vulnérables découvrent différents métiers.

• Angèle OLIVIER

**B**ruelles, samedi 14 novembre, des cris d'enfants se font entendre dans le restaurant Chez Henri et Agnès. Aujourd'hui, avec Toekomst Atelier de l'Avenir (TADA), ils découvrent l'univers de la restauration : de la préparation du plat au service du client. Christelle, la propriétaire, répond aux questions : « Henri et Agnès, ce sont les prénoms de mes grands-parents. Ils m'ont donné le goût des bonnes choses. »



Avant de cuisiner, les enfants se lavent les mains, accompagnés d'Alexandre, de la maison Dandoy.



traire. « Je suis heureuse d'être ici et ça me rapporte du bonheur », explique Melek,

cela l'a tellement aidé qu'il a décidé de passer son CEB. Et il a réussi ! »

### Un apprentissage de valeurs

Petits choux ou salade de fruits, les plats sont prêts. Alexandre, de la biscuiterie La Maison Dandoy, fait le point. « J'ai trouvé qu'ils étaient fort à l'écoute. Ils connaissent déjà beaucoup de choses et c'était chouette de pouvoir les challenger sur leurs connaissances. » Christelle est étonnée par leur sérieux : « Ils ont bien découvert toutes les saveurs. Ils ont tout compris. Tout est naturel chez eux. »

Sofie Fæts, fondatrice de TADA, ne se limite pas à la découverte des métiers. « L'enfant apprend aussi la discipline, la persévérance. Avec les ateliers cuisine, il apprend à s'adresser poliment au client, à travailler en équipe ou encore à résoudre les conflits. »

TADA veut prévenir la démotivation et les pertes de perspectives, qui sont des « causes de problèmes comme la fatigue d'apprentissage, le décrochage scolaire, parfois même le chômage de longue durée ». Une action préventive pour que « les enfants gardent leurs étoiles dans les yeux, même s'ils vivent parfois des circonstances difficiles ».

### TADA, c'est quoi ?

« Il faut faire tes devoirs parce que c'est bon pour plus tard. » Mais que signifie plus tard ? TADA l'explique de manière originale à des enfants âgés de 10 à 14 ans

issus de quartiers bruxellois socialement vulnérables. Tous les samedis, pendant trois ans, ils expérimentent différents métiers.

Participer à TADA est un engagement : pas question de rater un cours ! Mais cela ne les dérange pas, au con-

11 ans.

TADA veut donner une nouvelle motivation aux enfants. Antonio Ponte, instituteur à Saint-Josse et photographe bénévole pour TADA, se souvient : « J'avais un élève en 5<sup>e</sup> primaire qui avait déjà une année de retard. Il a participé à TADA et

### CARTE D'IDENTITÉ



Indrène Paavels

### Angèle OLIVIER Liège

Diplômée de l'ULB, je suis passionnée par le journalisme depuis mon enfance. Ce qui me passionne surtout dans ce métier, ce sont les rencontres. Des rencontres avec des mondes, des milieux, des personnes qui me font aussi évoluer dans ma propre vie. Je reste attirée par la radio, ce média qui arrive à véhiculer beaucoup d'informations et d'émotions par le seul véhicule de la voix et du son.

## « Pour que l'autre ne soit plus considéré comme un autre »

« Il y a une inégalité d'enseignement énorme en Belgique », affirme Sofie Fæts. Cette inégalité, Antonio Ponte, instituteur dans une école de classe 1 à Saint-Josse, la ressent tous les jours. « Dans les écoles plus aisées, les parents ont des relations qui ouvrent les portes. Grâce à TADA, les portes s'ouvrent aussi pour ces enfants. Sans l'association, ils n'auraient jamais pu découvrir tout ce qu'ils ont découvert. »

Une inégalité qui a poussé Sofie Fæts à créer TADA. Équivalente belge d'une initiative néerlandaise, IMC Weekendschool, TADA naît en 2012 avec deux classes : une francophone et une néerlandophone. TADA a depuis grandi : à la fin de cette année scolaire, 310 enfants auront suivi les cursus. Néerlandophones, comme francophones.



Sofie Fæts, fondatrice de TADA, participe à l'atelier cuisine.

Car souhaiter un dialogue interculturel, c'est aussi souhaiter un dialogue intercommunautaire. Pour Sofie Fæts, c'était une évidence « d'être bilingue. Parler avec l'autre, c'est aussi parler entre francophones et néerlandophones de Belgique ». A.O.



## Research and Additional Data

1. The effects of IMC Weekend School on self-confidence, future perspectives and social connectedness (5 pages)
2. Management summary kwantitatief alumni onderzoek IMC Weekendschool 2015-16 (6 pages)
3. Leadbetter, C. (2012, March). Innovation in Education: Pioneers from Around the World. (4 pages)

## Video Links

To learn more about the Weekend School, see the following videos:

<https://youtu.be/xEJMSo4N3Po>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTDI-yS7Ijg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMDyavmLKZY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twMQ3ljOIXI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdWqHjc9sko>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu\\_Ye-pu9wg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu_Ye-pu9wg)

[http://www.npo.nl/op-zondag-naar-de-weekendschool/06-08-2015/WO\\_NCRV\\_1614442](http://www.npo.nl/op-zondag-naar-de-weekendschool/06-08-2015/WO_NCRV_1614442)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-B5cGthSXLU>

## Web Sites

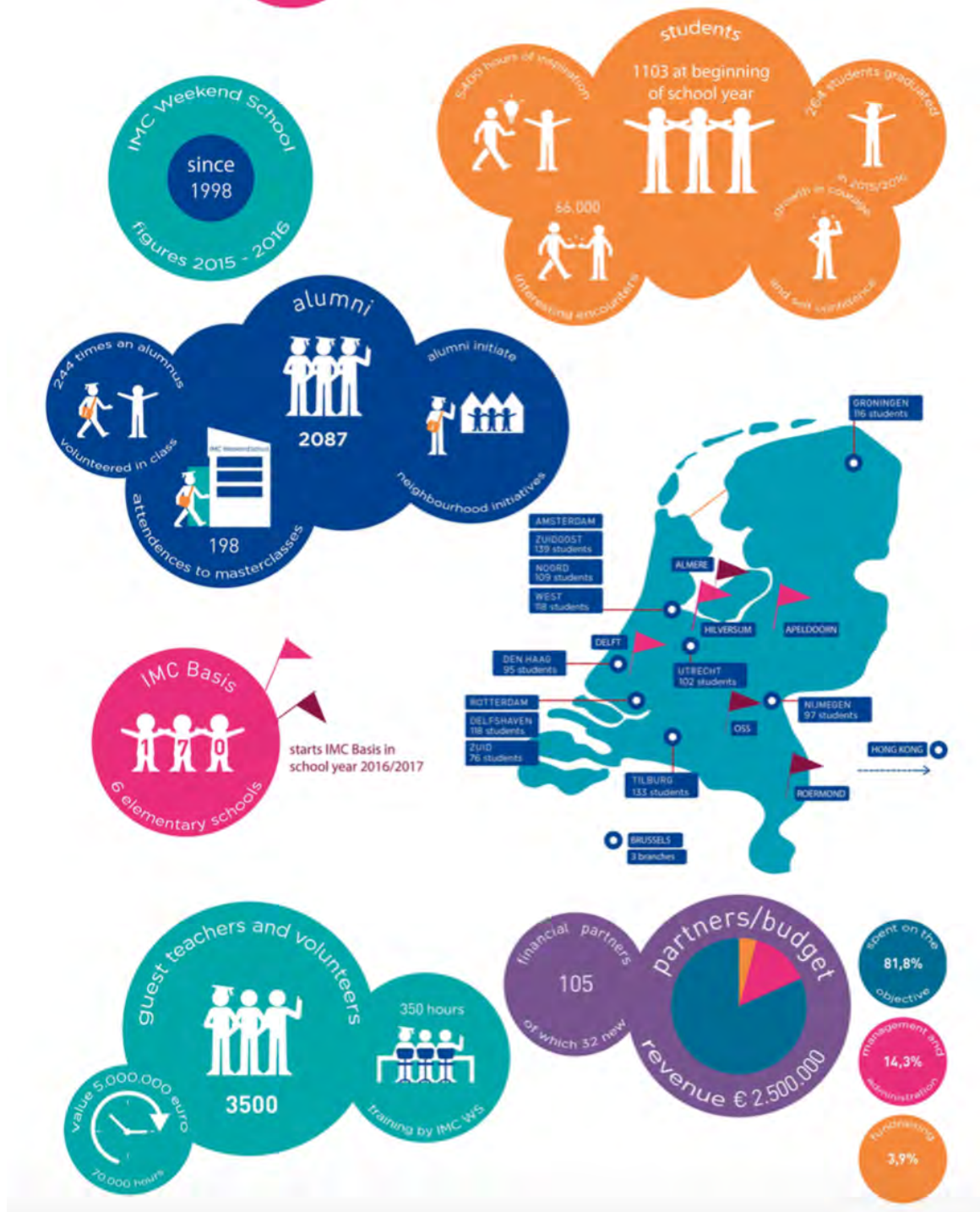
MC Weekend School is expanding globally already, having successful sister schools in Brussels (three branches) and Hong Kong. The organization is currently looking out for social entrepreneurs who wish to set up Weekend Schools in their own communities.

Target areas are underprivileged (immigrant) neighborhoods in larger cities of Europe. Social entrepreneurs will be trained at the Weekend Schools' headquarters in Amsterdam, and will receive subsequent on the ground support. Social entrepreneurs are expected to organize their own fundraising, and to set up their own independent organizations. As sister schools, we will work with the same concept and ideals, share knowledge, align pr, and organize alumni exchanges. Together, we'll build a global network of Weekend Schools.

Websites of our sister schools are:

- Toekomstatelier de l'avenir (TADA), Brussels <http://toekomstatelierdelavenir.be/>
- IMC Sunday School, Hong Kong <http://www.imcsundayschool.hk/>

# IMC Weekend School in Figures 2016





## Student-Created Publicity for Weekend School

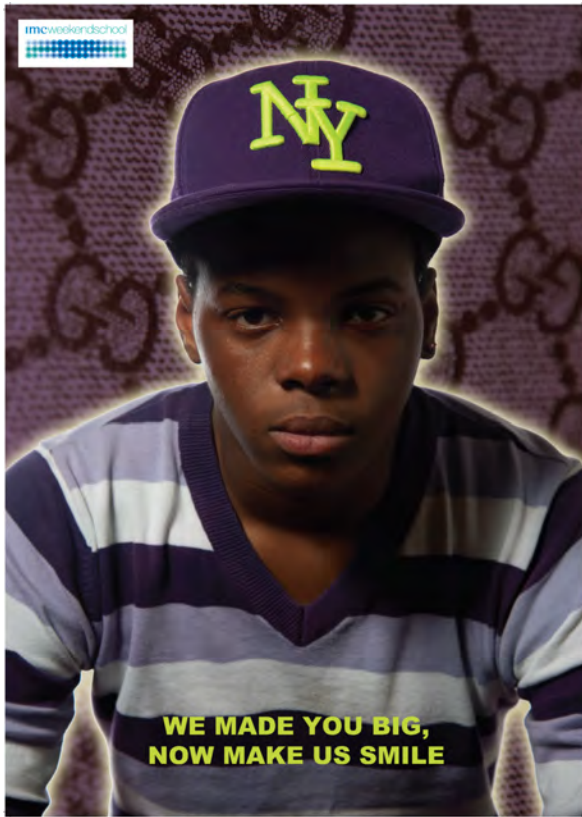


Figure 5: Weekend School students study with doctors



## **Weekend School Brochure**

**(Attached separately)**

# IMC Weekend School



IMC Weekend School is a supplementary school for children (aged 10-14) in underprivileged neighborhoods, often of immigrant backgrounds, in the larger cities of the Netherlands. Through a three-year course, professionals (volunteers) introduce students to a wide range of topics, including journalism, medicine, law, entrepreneurship and the arts. The curriculum also includes training in presentation, research, debate and conflict resolution. It is an education focused on developing an all-rounded character.

Research shows that IMC Weekend School alumni have better professional prospects, are more confident, and feel more connected with society than control groups.



Mutually interesting encounters



Real-life subject matter



Professionals as interesting guest teachers



Intriguing topics and classes



Focus on skills and talents



Students are actively involved



# IMC Weekend School Branches

IMC Weekend School consists of ten branches in underprivileged neighbourhoods in seven of the larger cities in the Netherlands. IMC Weekend School is also expanding globally, having sister schools in Brussels (three branches) and Hong Kong.



Flags indicate IMC Basis schools, where we are working towards systems change.



# Towards Systems Change

IMC Weekend School works towards systems change. In a pilot called IMC Basis, we run Weekend School education in regular schools during regular school time with permission of the Ministry of Education.

Following the positive results among students, teachers and guest teachers as well as the school neighbourhoods, IMC Basis is currently expanding.

“For me as a teacher, the mutual benefit for regular education and IMC Basis is obvious. When you compare time tables, it's easy to save time or have subjects reinforce each other.”

- a teacher on one of the IMC Basis schools.

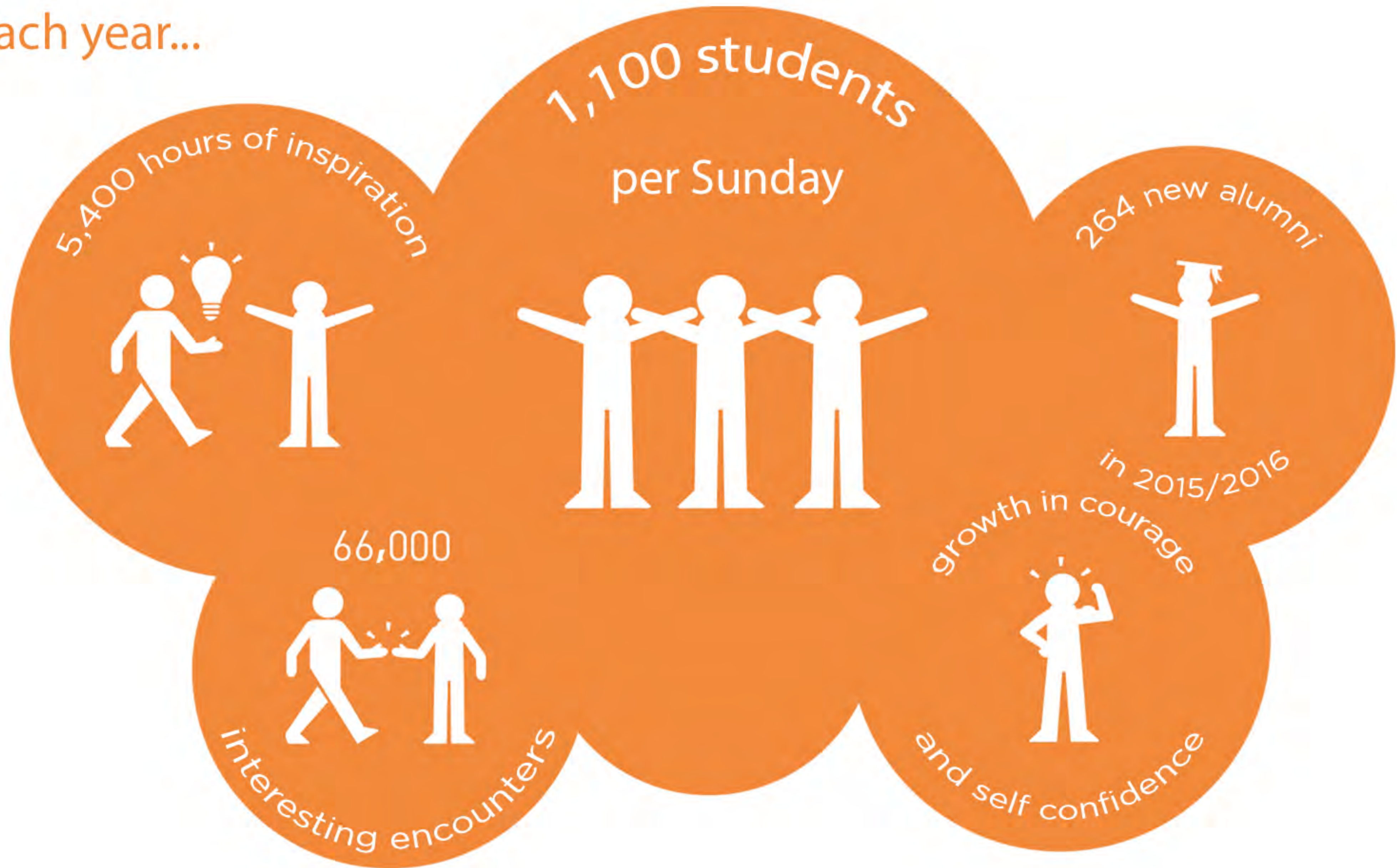


starts IMC Basis in school year 2016/2017



# IMC Weekend School Students

each year...



“ I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up, but when we tried out all those professions at the Weekend School, I pictured myself in all kinds of jobs!”

- Isabella, IMC Weekend School student (14 years)



# Vibrant Network

An extensive network of guest teachers, sponsors and volunteers supports IMC Weekend School. Alumni actively participate in this network. They attend trainings and serve as guest teachers for the new Weekend School generations.

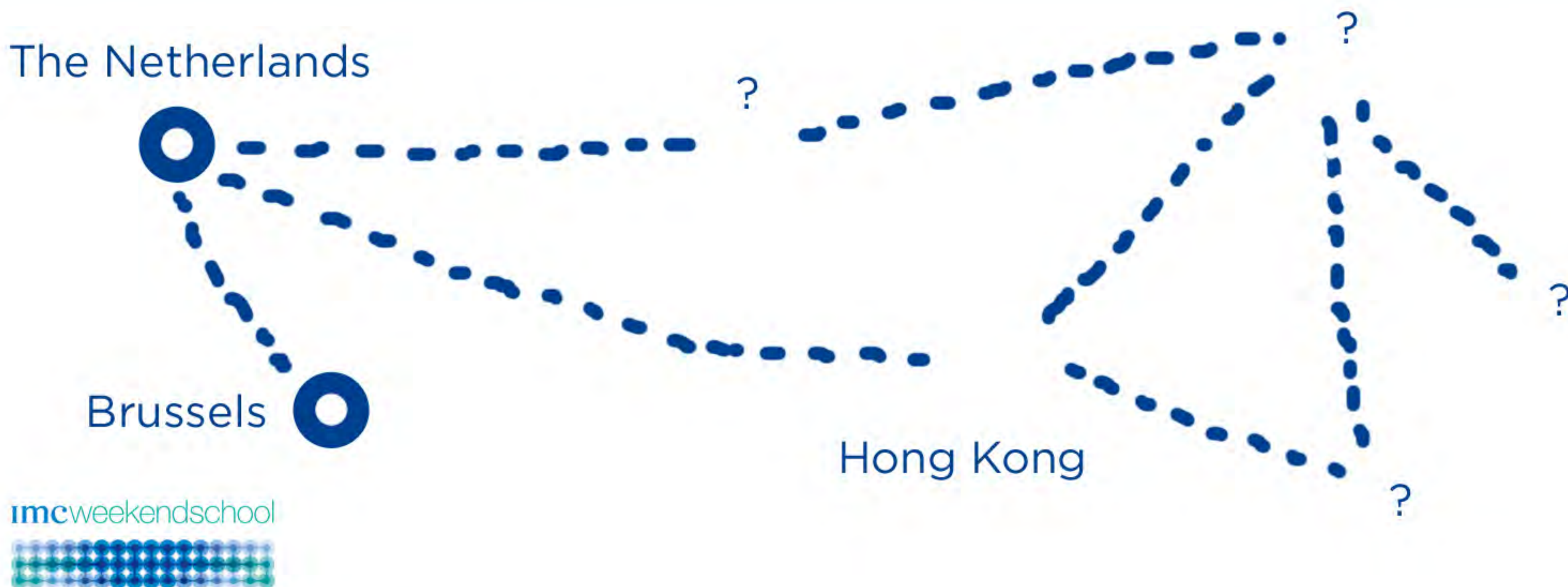
in 2015/2016...





# Building a Global Network

IMC Weekend School is also expanding globally, having successful sister-schools in Brussels (three branches) and Hong Kong. The organisation is currently looking out for social entrepreneurs who wish to set up Weekend Schools in their own communities.



Target areas are underprivileged (immigrant) neighborhoods in larger cities of Europe. Social entrepreneurs will be trained at the Weekend Schools' headquarters in Amsterdam, and will receive subsequent on the ground support. Social entrepreneurs are expected to organize their own fundraising, and to set up their own independent organizations. As sister schools, we will work with the same concept and ideals, share knowledge, align pr, and organize alumni exchanges. Together, we'll build a global network of Weekend Schools.



## The effects of IMC Weekend School on self-confidence, future perspectives and social connectedness

### IMC Weekend School

IMC Weekend School offers a two-and-a-half-year schooling program aimed at pupils between the ages of ten and fourteen. Passionate professionals volunteer to introduce their discipline and to provide the students with tasks that are derived from real life work situations. The students are stimulated to broaden their horizons by positioning themselves in diverse social roles and work situations, and by discussing actualities. Thus the students are encouraged to discover their own possibilities, capabilities, and affinities as to their future role in society.

The aim of IMC Weekend School education is to strengthen students in developing an open, curious, active and involved attitude that will help them reach a higher level of self-determination later in life. The expectation is that extensive self-knowledge, combined with knowledge about roles in society and with the experience of moving in diverse environments will contribute to the ability to make pro-active, better motivated, and more responsible choices for the future. This study focuses on three building blocks for a motivated, self-determined life attitude: self-confidence, future perspectives, and social connectedness.

### The study

IMC Weekend School expects her education to increase students' *self-confidence*, to broaden their *future perspectives*, and to enhance their sense of *connectedness with society*. A longitudinal study was conducted investigating whether participation in the Weekend School program indeed leads to growth on these three so-called 'core concepts'. Thus the underlying study did not investigate long term effects, but focused on the two-and-a-half years Weekend School program when students were between ten and fourteen years old. The main research question of this study was:

**Do students who attend IMC Weekend School show stronger development on the three core concepts than students with similar backgrounds, i.e. from the same neighborhoods, who did not attend IMC Weekend School?**

The study was set up by the Research & Development department of IMC Weekend School and conducted under supervision of methodological sociologist Prof. dr. H.G. van de Werfhorst (University of Amsterdam). Participating in the study were all nine locations of IMC Weekend School (based in seven cities) and all students starting at the Weekend School in 2009. The Weekend School students were compared with a control group, existing of classmates of their regular primary schools not attending the Weekend School program.

Because of the Weekend School program's unique setup and aims, specific instruments were developed in order to measure the expected effects. Earlier research (Van Klaveren et al., *in*

press) concluded that existing, validated, questionnaires were not sufficiently accurate to measure the specific non-cognitive skills stimulated by the Weekend School program. This study was special for its tailor-made instruments, among them the Weekend School Questionnaire (WSQ), developed and tested in the previously mentioned study. Also special were its unusually long duration and its thoroughness: over 700 students from seven different cities were followed longitudinally in five half year intervals.

The first wave of measurements was conducted in October 2009, before was known which of the primary school students would start at the Weekend School. The fifth and final measurement was conducted shortly before the Weekend School diploma ceremony in March 2012. At the start, 887 students participated (298 Weekend School students and 589 students from the control group). At the final wave, 718 students filled in the questionnaires (192 Weekend School students, 65 dropouts, and 461 control group students).

### Baseline measurement

Analyses of the student backgrounds revealed that Weekend School students and students from the control group had very similar environmental characteristics. Both groups had similar gender distributions and students from both groups were as often raised by both parents, who were as often born in the Netherlands and spoke Dutch at home as often. Their social capital was also similar (such as meeting with friends, being on MSN, playing outside), as was the degree to which their parents undertook (cultural) activities with them, such as going to the cinema or to the zoo.

There were differences as well. On many of the non-cognitive indicators used in this research, Weekend School students initially scored higher. Moreover, for cultural activities performed on their own, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups: Weekend School students more frequently read books, visited the library and searched for information on the internet.

### Method

This study investigated whether Weekend School students develop stronger on the three core concepts than the control group (their classmates at primary school). For statistical analyses, panel fixed effects models were used to control individual differences between students. These models measured the individual *growth* that Weekend School students and the control group made during the five measurement waves. This study was not about the differences between the two groups, but about the differences in *growth* between the two groups. Initial starting differences were thus made irrelevant, i.e. controlled.

### Results

The results are summarized below per core concept. All reported results are statistically significant.

#### *Self-confidence*

Weekend School students showed more growth than the control group on the concept 'self-confidence', as measured with six items with the WSQ (items with a 5-point Likert-scale). They showed a stronger growth on 1) the conviction that one succeeds if one does one's best, 2) positive self-perception and 3) satisfaction with oneself. Weekend School students also showed

more growth on the concept 'audacity' (6 items about making responsible decisions in both the academic and the social context). They were more likely to defend classmates who are bullied, and more inclined to ask questions. Moreover, Weekend School students developed themselves more on subjective school performance. They increasingly reported better performance than their classmates and put more effort in schoolwork.

### *Future perspectives*

The 'future perspectives' concept was measured with a broad range of indicators, most of them with open (descriptive) answer categories. On most indicators, Weekend School students showed more growth.

*Knowledge about professions.* When asked to give a description of professions (varying per wave), the accuracy of the answers of Weekend School students showed more growth than that of the control group. Weekend School students acquired better knowledge about a broad range of professions.

*Preferences for professions.* When asked about professions that students considered pursuing in the future, Weekend School students mentioned more professions than the control group. No differences were found for the so-called 'typical higher professions', namely 'doctor', 'lawyer' and 'accountant'. Differences were found for other professions: Weekend School students mentioned more 'special higher professions', such as architect, pilot or judge, and more middle class professions, such as teacher, nurse or policeman. This answer pattern reveals that Weekend School students take into account a broader range of professions than the typical three high status professions. No differences were found for expressive/artistic professions, such as actor, DJ or artist.

*Reasons for considering a profession.* When students were asked about their reasons for considering a certain profession, Weekend School students more often referred to the nature of the profession (e.g. 'doctor, because I want to make people healthy') and less often to its status (e.g. 'money' or 'prestige'). This answer pattern reveals that Weekend School students more often consider options for professions from their own personal motivation than from a societal standard image of what is 'high'.

*Talents.* On the question 'What are you good at?', Weekend School students gave different answers than non-Weekend School students. They mentioned not more, but different talents: more social skills (e.g. helping people, listening), more specific competences (e.g. reading maps, speaking languages, first aid), and less sport talents.

*Linking talents to professions.* Weekend School students linked their talents to specific professions as often as the control group students. It seems that the necessary insight to link talents and professional options is not yet acquired at this young age. Further research should reveal if the connection between specific talents and specific professional options indeed will only be made at a later age, and if so, whether Weekend School alumni do this more often than their peers with similar backgrounds.

*Future perspectives (WSQ).* The WSQ had six items to measure general future perspectives. For example: 'I have enough choice in what I can become later' and 'I like to talk about my future'. In the answers, no differences were found. The general questions of the WSQ thus did not show the differences that are found with the essay questions.

*Curiosity.* 'Curiosity' was slightly different from the other variables. IMC Weekend School expected students to already score high at the start of the Weekend School program. The program begins when students are ten years old because the Weekend School aims to feed the natural curiosity peaking at that age. Curiosity was included to explore its development but, contrarily to the other indicators, no growth was expected. Eight items in the WSQ measure curiosity (e.g., 'If I see something new, I want to know how it is made'). No significant difference was found between the Weekend School students and the control group.

### **Social connectedness**

'Social connectedness' was measured initially with the WSQ (4 items), focusing on 'social support' and 'network'. No differences were found between both groups. Weekend School students did not experience that people may help them when needed more often. Neither did they experience more practical support from their environment.

In the last two measurement waves, more indicators measuring social connectedness were included. General knowledge was measured with 12 items (varying per wave). The results showed higher growth for Weekend School students on general knowledge. They developed, for example, a larger vocabulary and more knowledge about (world) politics than their peers. Moreover, a validated questionnaire on citizenship (Ten Dam, 2010) became available, of which some indicators were included. The questionnaire items revealed no differences for 'knowledge about democracy'. However, Weekend School students knew better how to deal with differences between people than non-Weekend School students and thus scored higher on 'empathy'. Because general knowledge and dealing with differences between people were only included in the last two waves, these results are methodologically less sound.

### **Conclusions**

This study on the effects of supplementary education on non-cognitive factors is unique in size, duration and content. On all three investigated core concepts, growth was shown. Weekend School students showed more growth compared to control group students in several aspects of (1) self-confidence, including audacity in the academic and social context, (2) future perspectives, in particular growing knowledge about societal possibilities, more specific interest in societal possibilities, and a growing awareness of personal capabilities, and (3) social connectedness, in particular growing general knowledge and growing empathy.

Statistically all differences in growth have to be attributed to the Weekend School intervention. The fact that Weekend School students often had higher starting values than non-Weekend School students is irrelevant to the growth. Nevertheless the question may be raised whether the higher starting values would have led to stronger growth anyway, even without the program. On the conceptual level, it is important to mention that the concepts of investigation (self-confidence, future perspectives and social connectedness) specifically require social interaction. Even if a child is very receptive, strong growth on non-cognitive factors can only manifest itself in a nourishing environment.

### **Reflection and further research**

This study is important because there is hardly any substantial research on the effects of supplementary education on non-cognitive competences. The fact that non-cognitive growth was measured for Weekend School students implies that relevant concepts had been operationalized effectively.

This study offers a foundation for further theory development concerning effective supplementary education. It offers directions for answering the question how (supplementary) education can best prepare students for making better-motivated choices in their education and professional career. Questions that merit further investigation are, for example:

- Is a certain threshold for receptiveness required, or can growth (perhaps with modifications in the program) be realized for all children? If so, how?
- How are these non-cognitive development factors related to each other? Is there an order of development? Are there receptive ages for the different factors? Do they support each other?
- How are these non-cognitive development factors related to the ability to make better motivated choices? Are all of these factors required? Are there more essential preconditions?
- How and when do children link specific talents to specific career possibilities? Is this link indeed only made at a later age? If so, do Weekend School alumni do this more often than their non-Weekend School peers?

For IMC Weekend School the main question exceeds the Weekend School practice: how can supplementary education best be designed to stimulate self-determination in a motivated life attitude? To answer this question, several types of research are required. In particular: (1) conceptual (qualitative) research into the content and the determinants of 'better motivated choices', also outside of the Weekend School practice, (2) continuing longitudinal research among Weekend School participants compared to control groups, aimed at the abovementioned types of questions, (3) research into life courses of Weekend School alumni compared to control groups. Further research should focus on all three types of studies.

## **Introduction**

This is the *management summary* of a quantitative study of IMC Weekendschool alumni that was conducted in 2015-2016 by the Universiteit van Amsterdam, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and IMC Weekendschool. The study consisted of two phases: a preliminary qualitative study and a quantitative study. This summary is based on a Master's thesis on the quantitative part of the study (De Groot, 2016).

The aim of this study was to identify the long-term effects of the Weekendschool. The aims of the Weekendschool education should be palpable in the lives of the alumni, which makes them the best source of information for measuring the effects of the Weekendschool. In order to gather as much information as possible and to ensure that our influence on the survey was kept to a minimum, we first engaged in an open discussion with alumni in 33 interviews plus two practice interviews. These interviews that were principally designed for the preparation of the quantitative part of the study (i.e., the survey), also provided some interesting insights. Noteworthy is the finding that the Weekendschool intervention reportedly has more effect on pupils who experience more problems during their primary education. This shows that the intervention has more effect for the intended target group.

The best way to study what effects the Weekendschool has had on alumni is by conducting interviews and surveys. In theory, studies that aim to determine the effects of a particular intervention should be experimental in nature: they should include a control group, and the effects should be measured before and after the intervention (pre- and post-measurement). In the case of the IMC Weekendschool, this was not possible because there was no pre-measurement available. Even more importantly, it was impossible for us to assemble a control group in an ethically acceptable manner. For this reason, the most appropriate method of identifying the effects of the Weekendschool was a descriptive study based on interviews and surveys. This method also has an advantage in that a survey can directly ask about alumni's experiences of IMC Weekendschool. In an experimental study this would be impossible because one cannot ask a control group something about what it has not experienced.

The most important input for the questions in the questionnaire was the 33 interviews. Other preparatory sources that were used included: earlier studies on the Weekendschool; (other) information from the *impact map*, a map illustrating the impact of the Weekendschool on all stakeholders including guest teachers, partners and sponsors; workshops with employees; and discussions with IMC Alumni, the department within IMC Weekendschool that coordinates alumni relations. The result was a comprehensive questionnaire that could be completed by respondents within approximately a half hour. Respondents were able to take the survey online on their own preferred device via the *Qualtrics Survey platform*, which is used by universities around the world. Roughly speaking, the questionnaire included four types of questions: biographical questions about the respondent's life and lifestyle (23); control questions to verify that respondents actually read the questions (22); questions about the actual effects of the Weekendschool (133), and seven questions in which respondents were asked to give their view on the Weekendschool. Apart from the biographical questions, all questions were answered on a five-point scale: 1. not at all applicable, 2. somewhat applicable, 3. average applicable, 4. very applicable, and 5. completely applicable.

The following Weekendschool concepts formed the basis of the questions in the questionnaire: Making choices; Motivation; Future perspectives; Social Connectedness; Self-confidence; Social skills; Content (of the subjects); and Results (applying the knowledge obtained at the Weekendschool in one's own life). In addition, these concepts were cross referenced with a generally accepted theory: the theory of social emotional learning (SEL) (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Greenberg, Haynes, et al., 1997; Shriver, Schwab-Stone, & DeFalco, 1999; Zins, & Elias, 2006). In addition to being a theory, SEL is also a teaching

practice that was originally used within mainstream education but can also be applied elsewhere. The SEL model distinguishes the following concepts:

- Skills (self-management, problem-solving, decision-making, communication);
- Attitudes (towards oneself, towards others, and towards one's work);
- Knowledge (understanding of physical well-being, relationships, school and opportunities within society to become involved in).

Crossing these SEL concepts with those of the Weekendschool results in a matrix in which each cell is a specific manifestation of a possible Weekendschool effect. On a theoretical level, this exercise can be seen as a cross-validation of the Weekendschool concepts. But more importantly, using this approach was beneficial from a practical point of view, as we were able to remove redundant questions from overcrowded cells of the matrix and fill in cells that were found empty. This exercise even generated a number of additional questions that had not been identified in the preparatory phase.

After analysing all our survey questions, three questions proved to be unsuitable because they had been formulated ambiguously. In addition, we were unable to use the eight questions on work/completed education and the one question about parenthood because only 10 respondents had completed their studies (as their main activity) and only two respondents had a child. As a result, a total of 13 questions were dropped from the survey.

Prior to sending out the survey, the email addresses of all the alumni were checked. We were able to track down the email addresses of 968 (53%) of the total 1,823 alumni. The questionnaire was completed by 194 alumni (20% of the sample, or 11% of the population).

## Results

All the respondents were included in the analysis, as the responses to the control questions demonstrated that everyone had filled out the questionnaire seriously, and an analysis of the response patterns suggested that there was no trace of socially desirable responding. Of the 120 questions on all the possible influences that the Weekendschool could have, respondents said they experienced an above-average influence ( $>3$ ) on 105 questions, and a below-average influence ( $<3$ ) on 15 questions. Table 1 shows the number of questions whose responses were significantly higher or lower than 3 for different significance levels. The average for all questions was  $m=3.43$ , while the average of the 79 questions whose responses were significantly higher than average was  $m=3.65$  (at significance level  $p<0.001$ ).

	relative to (3) neutral	significance level		
		5%	1%	1‰
lower ( $<3$ )	15	9	7	4
average (3)		14	21	37
higher ( $>3$ )	105	97	92	79

*Table 1: Number of questions relative to the neutral category (higher/lower/average) per significance level*

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Below in Table 2, the 10 highest scoring questions are shown, i.e. those aspects of the Weekendschool that the alumni experienced as having the most influence. Table 2 also shows the four lowest scoring items.

In order to assess the psychometric quality of the questionnaire, we constructed scales for each of the SEL concepts as well as the Weekendschool concepts with the 10 items that contributed the most to the questionnaire's reliability. An exception to this was the scale for future perspectives, which had seven questions. All scales had a high level of reliability (*Cronbach's alpha*=0.87–0.93). The average item score of the concepts was between  $m=3.39$  and  $m=3.67$ . This means that for all the SEL concepts and for all the concepts used by the Weekendschool, alumni experienced an average to strong influence of the Weekendschool.

Aspects of the Weekendschool that alumni experienced as having the most influence	Avg.
At the Weekendschool, I encountered new and interesting topics.	4.52
Through the Weekendschool, I met interesting people.	4.22
At the Weekendschool, I learned that I can ask anything.	4.13
At the Weekendschool, I expanded my general knowledge.	4.11
Because of the Weekendschool, I now believe it's important to enjoy the things that I do.	3.98
I often talked to my parents about what I experienced at the Weekendschool.	3.98
Through the Weekendschool, I realised that it's possible to deal with adults in a fun way.	3.96
I learned at the Weekendschool that it's OK to make mistakes.	3.96
The Weekendschool improved the way I work together with others.	3.94
Thanks to the Weekendschool, I increased my knowledge of the world.	3.92
The Weekendschool taught me to persevere to the end once I have started something.	3.91
As a result of the Weekendschool, I want to find out more about my interests.	3.88
As a result of the Weekendschool, I feel it's important to use my qualities.	3.86
I learned at the Weekendschool to give my opinion when the situation calls for it.	3.86
Thanks to the Weekendschool, I know more about my future perspectives.	3.86
Aspects of the Weekendschool that alumni experienced as having the least influence	
As a result of the Weekendschool, I have (or have had) fewer problems at home.	2.07
At the Weekendschool I got to know partners of the weekendschool with whom I still have contact every once in a while.	2.32
I got to know Weekendschool (guest) teachers with whom I still have contact.	2.36
As a result of the Weekendschool, I want to lead a healthy life.	2.63

*Table 2: Highest and lowest scoring items (N=194); all items shown are significant  $p<.001$*

In order to assess the dimensionality of the questionnaire, a factor analysis was conducted. This revealed one major factor—which explains almost half (48%) of the variance—that overshadowed all the other factors. This factor can only be interpreted as ‘the general Weekendschool experience’. The alumni were unanimous (or, to put it another way, very homogeneous) in their perception of the Weekendschool. Given the heterogeneity of the group, the homogeneity of the Weekendschool experience is striking. We can only conclude that the Weekendschool experience among alumni is very strong and very unanimous.



From a technical point of view, the commonality of the Weekendschool experience means that, on the basis of perceptions, it was not possible to distinguish between different respondent groups. It was also pointless to compare different sub-populations with each other because we cannot expect to find any differences between them. In order to verify this assumption, we conducted comparisons between two sub-populations: men and women were compared, and active alumni were compared with those alumni who no longer maintained any contact with the Weekendschool. As expected, both comparisons did not exhibit any significant differences in degree between the different groups in terms of their Weekendschool experience.

## **Discussion**

The 20% response rate can be considered high to very high compared to other studies with the same medium, especially considering the background and age of the population. The fact that active alumni and alumni who have not maintained contact with the IMC Alumni network did not differ in the degree of their experience is an important finding, because this tells us that the questionnaire is not biased and also that the active alumni's responses to the questionnaire were unbiased. This result also demonstrates that the sample is most likely representative and that the results can be generalised to the entire population.

The findings show that Weekendschool alumni were influenced by their Weekendschool education in numerous areas. The alumni are largely positive about their time at the Weekendschool: they indicated that they would not have wanted to miss out on going to the Weekendschool ( $m=4.41$ ). They also look back positively on their time at the Weekendschool ( $m=4.54$ ). Alumni appreciated the way in which the Weekendschool transfers knowledge via guest teachers from the working world: the respondents thought the new knowledge was interesting ( $m=4.52$ ), they learned more about their own interests ( $m=3.74$ ) and they enjoyed attending the Weekendschool ( $m=4.37$ ). As a result of the Weekendschool, alumni experience broader future perspectives ( $m=3.86$ ) and more personal influence on being actively involved in society ( $m=3.67$ ). The respondents indicated that, as a result of the Weekendschool, they learned that you should always ask questions when necessary ( $m=4.13$ ), that it's OK to make mistakes ( $m=3.96$ ), and to pursue one's own interests ( $m=3.88$ ) and abilities ( $m=3.86$ ).

The goal of the Weekendschool is to have students learn to make autonomous, motivated and conscious choices—and not necessarily to have them know at a young age what study or vocation they want to pursue. This goal is reflected in the results of this study: alumni indicate that it was not so much what they wanted to study or what profession they wanted to follow that they learned at the Weekendschool ( $m=3.14$ ) as how they could achieve something ( $m=3.84$ ), how to make a plan ( $m=3.75$ ), and to persevere ( $m=3.91$ ). They learned to base their choice of profession on their own preferences: on what they find interesting ( $m=3.66$ ) and what they want ( $m=3.74$ ). Moreover, alumni felt that the Weekendschool helped them in making their career choices ( $m=3.57$ ).

Weekendschool alumni indicated that, as a result of the Weekendschool, they had a favourable view of education in general ( $m=3.68$ ). By giving children a peek into the future and by showing them what their possibilities are, they prove to be more motivated to finish high school ( $m=3.52$ ) and they want to continue to learn thereafter ( $m=3.77$ ).

Interestingly, alumni say that at the Weekendschool they saw how it was possible to interact with adults in a fun way ( $m=3.96$ ). This is consistent with other research studies that show that children in extracurricular activities benefit from the positive interaction they have with adults (e.g. Catalano, Berglund, Tyan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Cosden, Morrison, Gutierrez, & Brown, 2004; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Huang, Kim, Cho, Marschall, & Pérez, 2011; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord,

2005). However, the alumni also indicated that they maintained very little contact with valued contacts they made during their time at the Weekendschool ( $m=2.36$ ). This suggests the need for the IMC Alumni department to step up its activities. If Weekendschool alumni were given more opportunities to stay in touch with their former guest teachers, the positive effects of the Weekendschool could be even stronger.

One snap finding of this study is that alumni indicated a willingness to contribute to society as a result of the Weekendschool. This is not just a matter of words; they actually act on this. The alumni express their social engagement by working as volunteers (53%) and taking care of family and friends (96%). The alumni attribute their social engagement to the Weekendschool, which demonstrates that the Weekendschool's aim to form its students into caring and active citizens is achieved.

## **Conclusions**

Given that the Weekendschool produces many different and divergent effects and given also the need to minimise bias by limiting the number of topics, a relatively long questionnaire was necessary for this exploratory research study.

The findings of this study are interesting for several reasons. What stands out the most is the general consensus among the alumni. No matter how active they remained after finishing the Weekendschool and no matter which Weekendschool site they attended, the alumni's answers were homogeneous. This proves that the Weekendschool has succeeded in establishing a strong concept, replicable across its different sites, that produces the same—positive—effects in all students regardless of which Weekendschool site they attended.

The second finding that is noteworthy is that alumni were influenced in practice by all the theoretically formulated Weekendschool concepts (especially self-confidence, future perspectives, motivation and perseverance). This is an important result because it is a quantitative validation that the Weekendschool does achieve the goals that it propagates. Participation in the Weekendschool is not automatically assessed as positive (e.g. as a fun pastime) but as something formative and life-defining. Despite the open approach of this study and the many kinds of questions included in the questionnaire (e.g. also about anti-social behaviour and substance abuse), alumni scored questions related to the intention behind the Weekendschool concept unanimously high.

Third, the results demonstrate that the Weekendschool not only achieves all its self-formulated objectives but also promotes all the concepts formulated by theorists of *social emotional learning*. This opens up the possibility of a broader positioning and embedding of the Weekendschool, as the Weekendschool's approach has significant effects on concepts that are widely accepted internationally.

Of all the *stakeholders* of IMC Weekendschool, the students and alumni are the most important: the school revolves around them, and it is because of them that the Weekendschool exists. It is therefore gratifying to see that our open and informed research has verified that alumni have a very positive assessment of the Weekendschool and that the Weekendschool has had the effects that it seeks to have on them. These positive results are of the utmost importance for all the *stakeholders* of the Weekendschool: for the employees, who observe that their hard work has borne fruit; for the parents, who see that their support has paid off in the form of a tangibly better position for their child; for the financiers, for whom the worth of their investment is reflected in motivated citizens; and for the management and the board who see the Weekendschool's objectives validated.

This study into the long-term effects of the Weekendschool can be considered completed. It would only be interesting to replicate this study once a larger number of alumni are active in the labour market—something that will have to wait for several more years. This research suggests that the Weekendschool can embed itself more firmly in the ongoing discussions on education by examining *social emotional learning* in more depth—by determining more precisely how the more concrete Weekendschool concepts relate to the more abstract SEL concepts and by making comparisons with existing SEL practices. This requires a review of the literature as well as a comparison with SEL practices. For now, the results of this research will serve as a basis for the IMC Weekendschool *impact map*. In addition, a shorter version of the questionnaire will be prepared that in time can be used for further research on Weekendschool alumni and alumni of IMC Basis.

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# INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

LESSONS FROM PIONEERS  
AROUND THE WORLD

**CHARLES LEADBEATER**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROMAIN STAROS STAROPOLI



support and encouragement they need to feel good about learning. That is why Pathways to Education provides pupils with a support worker to act as a surrogate parent, coach and mentor. Yet relationships with adults are probably less important than the peer influences children come under: what their friends are doing and whether learning is regarded as cool. That is why good schools are often like communities in which students encourage and support one another.

Perhaps the most important factor that draws people back to learning is that it can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience: it is intrinsically rather than socially or economically rewarding. As cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham argues in *Why Don't Students Like School?* efforts to make lessons seem relevant and feel contemporary will not work for long. Students will see through such superficial devices. Relevant content is far less important, Willingham shows, than how pupils are invited to engage with it, what they can make of it. The most rewarding and exciting learning often involves subjects that go well beyond a pupil's everyday experiences and which stretch their imaginations. It does not have to be relevant to their everyday life. To be motivating, learning has to be meaningful for students. They have to see where what they have learned fits into what they already know and what the point might be. Learning has to excite people's curiosity but then help them safely navigate their way across the unfamiliar terrain. Nor does it count for much, Willingham says, if a teacher is nice, personable and tells good jokes only for their lessons to be poorly-organised, badly-planned and without a clear purpose: "The brilliantly well-organised teacher whom fourth graders see as mean will not be very effective. But the

Effective teachers have both qualities. They are able to connect personally with students, and they organize the material in a way that makes it interesting and easy to understand.

funny teacher, or the gentle storytelling teacher, whose lessons are poorly organised won't be much good either. Effective teachers have both qualities. They are able to connect personally with students, and they organise the material in a way that makes it interesting and easy to understand." That philosophy is at the heart of one of our other innovators, the IMC Weekend School in the Netherlands, created by Heleen Terwijn.

Terwijn, a psychologist at the University of Amsterdam, was researching the high rates of unemployment and crime amongst the Surinamese community in the south of the city, when she came across a puzzle. The teenagers she met were downbeat, demoralised, demotivated and about a quar-

ter of them were depressed. They seemed to have no faith in their ability to shape their future and could see little point in going to schools that seemed designed to channel them into a dead end. Yet the same children at the age of 10 were engaged, excited, hopeful: they believed anything was possible. What was it, Terwijn wondered, that changed, usually between the age of 10 and 13, to so demoralise these children?

The heart of the problem is that, at the age of 12, children in the Netherlands sit an exam which determines which of five kinds of secondary school they will enter. In general only students from the top two academic streams make it into higher education. Extreme motivation is required for a student to work their way out of one stream and into another. Once these bright, open and energetic children find themselves confined to one of the lower academic streams the world closes in on them. They see little point in learning and they are given precious little encouragement to do so.

Terwijn hit upon a solution which involved reinventing an old idea: the Sunday school. Modern mass education systems in Europe can trace their roots to Sunday schools set up by churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Terwijn decided she would set up a Sunday school with a twist: a place where children from the poorest backgrounds could meet and be taught on short courses run by professionals passionate about their field – doctors, vets, lawyers, advertising executives, designers. If the students could feel the passion of these professionals, have their horizons opened up and see how learning connects to the real world, that might motivate them to learn, Terwijn figured.

Terwijn completed her university research in December 1997 and devised the plan for the first Weekend School on the back of an envelope. She was lucky enough, through a friend, to meet Rob Defares, the managing director of a trading company IMC, who stumped up the money for the first school, which Terwijn opened with 30 students in January 1998. After a lengthy period of trial and error, Terwijn honed her model. This is how it works.

Each Weekend School is open every Sunday during the school term for about 100 children from three school years, from schools in the lowest tier of the secondary education system. The Weekend Schools take place in borrowed offices and buildings; some loaned by universities, others by companies. Each school has three staff to plan the programme and look after each year group. Those staff organize a roster of guest and volunteer



Heleen Terwijn (TOP LEFT), founder of the IMC Weekend School network in the Netherlands, and young people who come to the Weekend School to take part in collaborative and creative projects that introduce them to new disciplines and increase their motivation for learning, led by tutors who are usually professionals in fields such as advertising, the law and medicine



teachers who run classes and help students with their school work. The point, Terwijn says, is for children to be able to navigate their own paths in life. But that is easier said than done: "I loathe projects that think if they take kids to the concert hall they will say 'Oh! I will go forever because I suddenly fell in love with classical music!' I mean, come on, that's not how it works. We are talking about the way that kids give form and shape to their lives and how we can help sustain that."

The Weekend School aims to add motivational spice to the dull educational diet these children endure. Weekend School is designed to be fun. It involves practical work and often a visit to someone's workplace: the zoo to see a zookeeper at work; a court to see a judge. By introducing them to aspirational role models, the School helps to broaden their horizons, as Melle Dotinga, an advertising executive and one of the guest teachers explained: "If you live in an area like these children live in, you don't meet people in professions. Your view on your possibilities in the world is very limited. What Weekend School does is help children discover that there are so many more possibilities." Weekend School students, the evaluations show, have more sense of agency and control over their lives than their peers, and so, Terwijn maintains, they are more likely to want to carry on learning.

Others agree. Terwijn took her time to iron out all the kinks in her model. When she was ready to expand it took almost two years to find her second sponsor, IBM. That gave her the credibility to approach other corporate sponsors. There are nine Weekend Schools in cities across the Netherlands and about 30 schools that emulate the model. The Weekend School, like Pathways to Education, does not change what is taught at school, nor how it is done: what the two programmes add is the catalyst of motivation. They are like outboard motors, added onto the system to propel it forward.

The great strength of state education systems is that they can mandate that children should go to school. As a result they do not have to worry about marketing, advertising or sales. Schools open their doors and children have to come. The weakness of state education is the flip side of this: as a result these systems pay too little attention to what motivates children to learn. Too many children can be physically present but psychologically absent. Innovations to motivate children to learn are as important as hot chilli is to a spicy curry. Take it away and you're left with something very bland.



Young boys relax at the end of a session at the Weekend School, which aims to motivate children to continue learning even when they have been deposited in lower grades at school