

International People's College (IPC) Three Year Plan (2010-2012)

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Introduction

The three year plan consists of a narrative part setting out the main ideas, guiding principles and key goals for the various areas of activities at the school. This paper is accompanied by a set of appendices specifying the goals and activities designed to achieve these goals. For each goal/activity an indicator is put in place allowing us to monitor to which extent we are approaching our goals for the development of the school over the next three years.

In the appendices specific goals/activities have been given a priority: High 1, Medium 2 and Low 3 since there are possibly more ideas for activities than resources to carry them out. The priority relates to the full three year period, so that a high priority does not necessarily mean that the activity should be part of the programme for the first year of the plan.

Every year by the 1st of October the Board and the Principal will conduct a review of our status in relation to the three year plan.

Furthermore the school will initiate a process leading up to a more clearly formulated mission statement as soon as possible. Among many other things we should discuss the principles for the composition of staff and decision makers (School Council/Board) at IPC.

Status by the Beginning of the Period

By the beginning of the three year period The International People's College is facing big challenges. In 2009 the school has experienced a considerable decrease in numbers of students on both long and short courses. The falling number of students on long courses is very likely partially due to the worldwide financial crisis that we've faced from autumn 2008.

The falling number of students on the short courses is primarily caused by the fact that Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke from January 1st chose to move all their course activities to their own newly opened educational centre in Copenhagen. The success of the many one-week courses held at IPC and the need for more courses in the future made it viable for MS to take this step.

At IPC we have chosen to focus on marketing and networking in 2009 and in this connection we have employed a PR- and marketing coordinator on 30 hours weekly. This arrangement has been up and running for half a year and with the acceptance of the board we would like to prolong it for one more year. After this we plan to evaluate the efforts and the results to reach a decision on making the arrangement permanent. So the PR efforts of IPC have been strengthened considerably and a detailed marketing strategy is now an integral part of this 3 year plan.

But of course the decreasing number of students gives us reason to worry and calls for new thoughts and ideas in relation to the profile of the school and its focus areas.

Sustainability and “Greening” the IPC Profile

The global financial crisis and the clear climate changes we have seen lately most likely mark the end of an era in world history, where industrial and economical growth has been on top of the agenda with short term political and financial decision making as a consequence. The demand for sustainability and real development for all nations and peoples will set the political agenda of the future. Therefore the concept of sustainability – understood in the widest possible way in relation to development-, economic-, social-, political- and environmental issues - should be brought to focus through activities at IPC in the years to come. In this connection we should aim at “greening” the IPC profile – in relation to our curriculum, food and physical environment as such.

Aims for our Future Students

To obtain a peaceful and sustainable world development the world citizens of the future have to be able to conduct active global co-citizenship and thereby:

- actively and with open minds take part in the political development nationally and internationally,
- relate critically to the flow of information and news,
- gain a political and development related overview,
- listen to and understand people whose cultural, social, religious and political backgrounds are different from ones own.

The International People’s College should be at the forefront in all these areas.

Cross-cultural Learning

The cross-cultural learning, dialogue and understanding as an important contribution to a peaceful and sustainable global development should be reflected in the pedagogical initiatives in relation to political-, cultural-, religious-, philosophical-, development- and business perspectives. Global competencies are of a high value today and represent a big strength for

IPC - the competencies acquired by our students during their stay should be examined, defined, described and efficiently communicated.

Core Values

The core values of IPC as mentioned in the conceptual framework should be given high priority in the everyday life of the school among students, staff, boards and councils. They reflect a certain attitude towards life and the world, war and peace, freedom and rights, humanism and tolerance - and should therefore be experienced in a holistic perspective through the initiatives and activities of the school.

Upgrading

By the beginning of the period the pedagogical staff is short of global political competencies to some degree. This shortcoming will be dealt with through new employments, in service training and through building of mutually inspiring collaborations with like-minded organisations during the next three year period. Partnerships on a pedagogical and academic level, but also partnerships leading to future course activity at IPC.

Members of the School Council and the Student Union are encouraged to take active part in these processes.

Student Union

In 2008 – 09 we have managed to reactivate our Student Union. This is a very happy development as we depend on our former students and their commitment to promote the school to a large degree – thus bearing the school's profile and identity. Activities and educational initiatives arranged for – and by – the Student Union should be developed in the coming years.

The Staff

The staff of IPC is a devoted and hard working team. On a daily basis we ensure that the school is professionally and effectively functioning. We should not forget to value this. It's something to be proud of. We should care for - and protect - each other and if the circumstances allow, provide for a flexible working place. In spite of numerous daily challenges on many different levels we have a good and constructive collaboration and we hope – as the number of students will increase – that we will be able to increase the number of staff members in order to proactively meet the many exciting challenges that we are facing.

1. The Long Courses & Pedagogical Challenges

Long courses at IPC are considered the “backbone” of the IPC activities. The school should aim at 60 – 70 students for each term. They should represent as many different nations and cultures as possible and the school should aim to achieve that 10 - 15% of the students are Danish. The school should very soon work out and decide upon a clear policy about scholarships.

The five basic categories of classes – the global perspectives, the regional studies, the personal and professional skills, languages and creativity – are kept and new subjects should be developed within this framework.

Furthermore the school should work for:

- Conscious Integration of Core Values into all teaching and everyday life
- Professional and Pedagogical development
- Life beyond IPC integrated into IPC life

See the Appendix for more details.

2. Short Courses

The International People's College offers short courses, both in the summer holidays and as parallel activities to the long courses. The majority of the short courses shall be open for everybody, but occasionally courses designed for a special target group, will be hosted by the school; the students attending the courses not covered by the Danish *Folkehøjskole* Law, will not be included in the number of students per year.

The objectives of the "ordinary" short courses shall support the school's overall aim and objectives.

Short Courses shall:

- strengthen the profile of the school
- reflect and promote the profile of the school
- show the school's potential to future students and partners
- attract potential students for long courses
- increase the number of students/year
- generate additional income for the school

See the Appendix for more details.

3. Marketing and Public Relations

Each new generation of IPC students reinforces our awareness of how special our "product" (= the IPC experience) is. Due to global developments and the pressure caused by the financial crisis IPC faces an exciting challenge of defining in a much clearer, more accessible and attractive way what outcomes and benefits one can expect from a stay at IPC.

The marketing efforts of the school have to cover the whole world, which is a task that cannot be carried out without the active help and involvement of former students, IPC stakeholders and all "Friends of IPC". Establishing good working relations, defining clear communication channels and building up on everyone's knowledge and networks is a precondition for our success.

The active use of modern technology and marketing tools has to go hand in hand with professionalism in areas where we compete with much stronger and larger organizations. At the same time, it has to be clearly communicated that the IPC experience entails elements that such competitors cannot offer. Continuous self-reflection that is set into a solid framework of organizational mission, vision and values has to be an integral part of IPC marketing efforts.

Marketing and Public Relations Activities shall:

- ***reflect a clear mission, vision, values and brand:*** we need to know who we are, we have to be good at it and show it with everything we say, show and do
- ***maintain constant contact:*** biggest IPC resource are its people and their experiences, networks, ideas
- ***contribute to building partnerships*** for projects, at conferences, in know-how etc.

See the Appendix for more details.

4. Projects and Partnerships

The International People's College pursues the objectives stated in its statutes through educational activities at the school and therefore will not set up development projects. But the school needs to engage itself locally, nationally and internationally in order to enrich and develop its methods of teaching, its strength as a cross-cultural institution and its leverage in Danish and international society. It can not develop in a vacuum but needs long term partnerships for mutual development with Danish or international organizations or institutions.

Partnerships shall:

- provide access to field experiences to enrich various lines of study
- provide access to new knowledge on cross cultural teaching and learning
- provide an outlet for field use of IPC's unique experiences
- provide an outlet for use of IPC's excess capacity
- provide IPC with strengthened leverage through linking with organisations or institutions with solid standing in Danish or international community

See the Appendix for more details.

5. Fundraising and Income Generating Activities

Funding from the Ministry of Education and the fees paid by students on long and short courses should ideally cover expenses necessary for running and developing the International People's College. However, presently, the number of students does not allow us to fully utilize the capacity of the school and IPC needs supplementary funding in order to develop as a school, grant scholarships for students unable to pay a full fee, and in order to maintain the standard of its physical facilities. The IPC hopes for help from Friends of IPC and from the Student Union and will itself try out other sources of funding.

Fundraising Activities shall:

- use the creative capacities of Friends of IPC and the Student Union for collecting money for scholarships

- approach individuals as well as enterprises with international outlook
- try out access to funding from the European Union
- develop its capacity for and the marketing of the rent out of excess capacity

See the Appendix for more details.

6. Physical and Psychological Working Environment

The development of the physical environment in the coming three year period will be dominated by some basic principles. First of all there are some improvements we have to make according to the law. We urgently need to implement these. Second, we want to give priority to energy saving improvements. This serves both an environmental purpose – perfectly in line with our efforts to “green” our profile – and an economical purpose. Third, there are a number of reparations and improvements necessary in order maintain our buildings and facilities. We have tried to make a prioritized list with indications of a time perspective.

We will in the coming three years keep on working to improve our psychological working environment and to develop a better internal communication. One of the challenges is that we have a number of guest teachers who are not at IPC permanently. Meeting participation via Skype is currently being tested as a part of the solution.

See the Appendix for more details.