

**Promoting and Living the IB Mission**

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Thank you Tony (Flatley), thank you Michael (Matthews), thank you to all colleagues on the Heads council for this outstanding conference and for inviting me to address your group.

A special thank you goes to Nancy Forster and her colleagues at CIBO for organizing and running such an inspiring three days and for the quality of the speakers and the sessions. Nancy Forster has a special place in my heart since we collaborated on a booklet on international-mindedness, published and used during North American workshops over five years ago. Seeing the success of Irene Davy's three repeat sessions on world mindedness in IB philosophy and practice that were attended by more than half of our participants, is living proof of how much need there is for the IB to offer help with this matter. One of the tools is already there with the booklet *What can I be* describing the IB identity. It is something you should all be aware of by now either by having received it from the IB or after Andrew Bollington's presentation. It is a gem and illustrates in a simple fashion, the IB story.

For me, it also touched a strong, personal chord by using masks as a symbol of our identity. I wrote my dissertation on glass masks in antiquity, especially those produced by the Phoenician and the Punics, the traders of the ancient world who crossed the shores of the Mediterranean sea, sailed along the coasts of Asia and around Africa and were the first to teach me about ancient internationalism. Suddenly in discovering this booklet, I was taken back to my university years and the long hours I spent studying the meaning of masks and how these years of study allowed me to look much deeper at their power, at their meaning and at essential and ambiguous questions in our diverse world:

-can we read the masks?

-can we read behind the masks?

The use of masks in the booklet seems to be a metaphor for all the feelings I had developed growing up in an international setting, moving from country to country, from language to language, the realization that I developed a different personality when I spoke a different language, the uneasiness in changing language usually spoken when talking to the same person.

Being international became a way of life for me. Today young people are growing up in a world where mass immigration has made classrooms much more diverse and the issues of our world have become much more global. These young people need to be prepared for living and working in different countries other than their own and in a fully interconnected world.

I was very taken by the choice of masks to impersonificate (the Latin word persona comes from the Etruscan Phersu that means mask) all the ambiguities of an international education and therefore of the IB identity. I applaud the members of our communications team for having chosen masks to represent our multifaceted identity. Masks belong to all cultures, just like the IB strives as best as it can, to encompass them also.

I feel extremely humbled to speak about promoting and living the IB mission in front of so many members of this audience who have been involved with the organization for longer than I have, especially since hearing from so many of you over the past two days how you promote and live daily life in your schools, this IB mission that is so important to us and which is best exemplified by the Learner Profile. A Learner Profile that is now common to our three programmes and to all aspects of who we are. As heads of schools, I don't need to tell you the qualities of our programmes, nor why an IB education is becoming even more crucial today than it was 40 years ago. You are here because you know it.

When I first addressed this distinguished audience, four years ago in Cancun, Mexico I spoke about the IB as a world of givers and appealed to IB World Schools to reach out to others and help our organization promote access. In Bangkok, I spoke to you about solidarity and generosity, and during this San Francisco conference, when I have to address you about promoting and living the IB mission, I feel so moved by the many presentations we have heard about the role of schools, about the philosophy of international-mindedness practiced in schools that I wonder how I can be the one to speak to you about promoting and living the IB mission when many of you are already doing it so well.

Personally, I can only say that listening to you fueled my passion for the IB even more. This passion that drives me and also drives so many of you who volunteer way beyond the call of duty; you make it your job to make this organization better known and its programmes available to many more students.

I started our Board retreat this summer by plagiarizing one of the greatest French statesmen, Charles de Gaulle. He said in the opening sentence of his Memoirs, *l'Appel, the Call to Honor*: *"All my life, I have had a certain idea of France. This is inspired by sentiment as much as by reason"*

and I told them, as I am telling you: For part of my life, I have had a certain idea of the IB. This is inspired *“by sentiment as much as by reason”*.

I am the product of a classical French education, where Greek and Latin played a major part, an education that was free including the completion of my PhD at the Sorbonne and for which I am extremely grateful to my country. This gratitude for having received a free public education is also very much driving my service on the IB board and my commitment to be a champion of education.

Why the IB? What is in the IB that compels me to serve it? I think I can best explain it to you through an anecdote involving a quote from a French author of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, Michel de Montaigne: *“Let my tutor remember to what end his instructions are principally directed, and that he does not so much imprint in his pupil's memory the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio”*

This really struck a chord with me, not only because I was born in Carthage, and specialized in the Punic world at university but because I was horrified to realize that I could recall right away the date of the destruction of Carthage, 146 BC, but very little about the manners or the characters of Hannibal or Scipio. I feel that a large part of my education has been spent learning facts but not reflecting enough about them.

When describing an ideal education 400 years ago, Montaigne seems to be describing the IB. He encouraged teachers and students to go beyond books and explore the world of knowledge and experiences. A formative education was to include travels, physical and intellectual challenges, social action and learning of languages. Such a wealth of diverse opportunities contributed to the development of a well made rather than a well filled head and these ideas are also the essence of one of my favorite proverbs, a Chinese one: *“Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand.”*

As far as my own education was concerned, my head had been well filled, while my children on the contrary, all three holders of an IB bilingual diploma, had a well made head and I give all the credit for it to the IB programmes and their teachers at the Atlanta International School. So my passion for the IB arose first from the gratitude I have for the education my own children received, which allowed me to discover the IB, its inquiry based education and the theory of knowledge course as well as its commitment to service. This passion is now fed on a constant basis by what I see the IB achieving with so many students, from a very early age on developing in them a sense of curiosity and creativity that prepare them for a life of life long learning and service.

What is my goal in addressing you today about promoting and living the IB mission as chairman of the IB Board, a Board that is the guarantor of the IB mission and the quality of its programmes? Five heads of schools are members of this board. You all know by now Michael Matthews and I would like the other four to stand when I mention their name: Ian Andain, Karen Caffin, Al Penna and Graciela Xanthopoulos who is also the secretary of the Board.

The IB is without any doubt a mission driven organization. You, as heads of schools, would not have written the Bangkok communiqué nor chosen such a title for this conference if it had not been to highlight the mission of our educational movement. We have to be beacons of humanity, creativity and learning. I know that many schools have joined our organization because of our challenging programmes and curriculum as well as for our rigorous assessment that enable us to compete using standards accepted internationally but this is not enough to be an IB World School. We challenge schools to demonstrate what they have done to fulfill the mission of the organization, to inculcate in their students the desire to work towards a better and more peaceful world, where people, with their differences, can also be right. Under the leadership of George Walker, our former director general, we were able to articulate this mission embedded since its beginning in our organization. Now we have to make sure to walk the talk as Terrice Bassler challenged us to do.

You, as heads of schools, have a major role to play in the growth of the IB, you intuitively understand what the IB is trying to do and I hope you won't hesitate to suggest new ways, to push for quality, to challenge yourself and us, in this wonderful endeavor that is an IB education.

I am here to ask you as heads of schools to help us improve the IB and promote all aspects of our mission. By helping us strengthen the IB, you strengthen your schools and you also enable more students to benefit from it. We need you as champions of community development, university recognition, public relations, and fundraising.

Jeffrey Beard, our director general has outlined brilliantly for you our plan for the organization. By further developing our existing programmes, creating new programmes and developing partnerships we can reach entirely new groups of students. These developments are critical to the longer term success of the organization but need to be undertaken as part of a carefully planned strategy that recognizes the significant investments and risks involved.

Not all of these investments and initiatives can be funded through the revenues generated by our core activities. We have to depend on fundraising to generate outside funding and here again you have a crucial role to play.

One of our fund raising initiatives has been the Director General Circle and I have agreed to co-chair it with your colleague Stephen Spahn. Some of you already know about it and have been very generous, either personally or in leading us to some of your contacts. This will provide the director general with discretionary funds for needs aimed at improving the quality of our programmes and access to them.

Furthermore, as far as access is concerned, we are looking at foundations and corporations, without obviously excluding individuals, to drive our growth and enable more students to experience and benefit from an IB education regardless of personal circumstances. Any lead or advice you can give us in this regard would be extremely welcome.

Without funding, we will never be able to rise to the challenges made to us by Terrice Bassler on Thursday night. One of them is exactly to the point of my request: *“The parents of your students and the alumni of your schools are more than likely people of higher than average status and means in their societies. As a community, are you doing all that you can do to draw upon their resources and influences, not just to develop the schools they attend, but in a wider service and contribution that benefits citizens of fewer means?”*

I quote our speaker again for another of her challenges where we would welcome your help and the one of all IB World Schools associations:

*“Lastly, are you contributing all that you can to policy-making and advocating for quality for all children? Does the IB have a “seat at the table” in policy-making arenas in education—locally, nationally in the countries where you are, regionally, globally?”*

We have had such thoughtful, inspiring, and challenging speakers during these past three days and I cannot quote them all, but while I was listening to yesterday’s morning speaker, Lloyd Axworthy, I felt he was asking us to do all what I, and many others in this audience, have been dying to see the IB do.

Our first priority and responsibility goes to our services to IB World Schools. Another point I want to make to you in the middle of this appeal for support is the fact that the IB Board of Governors, while fully embracing its role in development, is strongly opposed to depend on fundraising for its operational budget allocated to schools service.

But to rise to the challenges of being beacons of humanity, creativity and learning, we are sorely lacking in funding, infrastructure and manpower. Only when we have established and funded a development and partnership arm, will the IB really walk the talk of its mission statement.

In its early years the IB grew out of grants from governments, the Ford Foundation, the Twentieth Century Fund and a few others, then we stopped looking for outside funding for over a quarter of a century and this is going to change, and again I am asking for cooperation and advice.

I am sure that the background of the IB's first director general, Alec Peterson, who had been sent in the 50's by his government to Malaysia, to "*win the heart and the mind of the people*" helped him expand the IB in its early years and we need now a new burst of development to prepare many more young people for the new challenges that lie ahead of them.

The educators who first created the IB were looking at a future where we would avoid the mistakes of the past. Following people of their generation who created first the League of Nations to avoid another conflict after the first world war, the war to end all wars, educators created the first International School in Geneva.

Then came the creation of the IB after the second world war, and of the United Nations International School, 60 years ago. NATO was then set up where, at its war college, officers from former enemy nations studied together and set the example for what would become the United World College (UWC) movement. UWC together with the International School of Geneva had a major role in the creation of the IB and of the Foundation that was incorporated in Geneva in 1968, the same year the first exams were offered.

What politicians and educators were realizing was that people of the world, more than ever, needed to know about each other, understand each other, and respect each other.

40 years later, new technologies have made us inextricably interconnected: we have to think globally and act locally. The purpose of an IB education is exactly this, educating young people to be responsible not only for their future but for the future of our planet and to feel a sense of solidarity with people all around the world. As IB educators, we need to promote social entrepreneurship and give our students what Tom Friedman in his masterful book *The World is Flat* describes as "*a business school brain with a social worker heart.*"

The Learner Profile combines the attributes our students will need to develop, a business school brain: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers and communicators with a social worker heart: principled, open-minded, caring and balanced, attributes enabled by the capacity to be at the same time reflective and risk takers.

IB students need to have, in the words of Alec Peterson and Roger Peel, two former director generals, *“the power to think, the will to act and the courage to persevere.”*

And I would add the courage to be different from one another, the courage to be right, and the courage to be wrong and to fail. Our students have to be taught the important concept of always trying their best, always trying hard, and with Confucius to learn to say:

*“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall”*

One of the many challenges we face is that we are and we remain a very Western organization, international in locations but not yet fully in spirit. While promoting our Learner Profile and our mission statement, and embedded in them, the idealistic notions of justice, equality, and liberty, we need not forget that the promotion of these ideals may not always be received in the same way in various parts of the world.

We should not be seen as an organization steeped predominantly in Western culture and we need to reach out to other cultures in friendship and sincerity. As heads of school, you all have a role to play personally or through your teachers in the various academic committees of the IB and I hope that you will take the lead in helping us not only internationalize our curriculum but also include best practices from other educational traditions that you witness in whatever country you are based.

IB World Schools, in your words, need to be beacons of humanity, creativity and learning. Schools are the best place to be fully aware that to build the future we need to learn about the past and create our present. And, for this present to be a good place to be, it needs to be filled with hope: hope built on knowledge, dreams and love. As the British historian Arnold Toynbee pointed out, *“now that the world is united by technology, we have to unite it at the emotional level. Love is the spiritual impulsion that pushes mankind to give instead of to receive.”* And this is where the role of community service is so important in an IB education to develop a global sense of social responsibility and I also strongly believe that individually we can do very little but that collectively we can help. I do hope that our students, imbued with the characteristics of the IB Learner Profile, will always be sensitive to what they are doing, question if they are doing what they should but also if they are doing all they could to promote a better and more peaceful world.

As a community of IB World Schools, IB graduates, IB teachers, IB parents, IB friends, we have the possibility to develop the new participatory culture we heard about yesterday and the imperative to be beacons of humanity, creativity and learning.