

7 Questions to: Pascale Cup, national director of The International Award for Young People, the Netherlands

In 2015, the International Award programme has been existing for more than 20 years in the Netherlands. On May 21 and 22 HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, chairman of the International Award Association (IAA), visits the Netherlands to promote the International Award. Therefore he is going to talk with politicians, managers, school principals and Award participants. We have interviewed Pascale Cup, the national director of The International Award in the Netherlands.

The IAYP is the leading programme where youth between 14 and 25 years can discover their own talents and strong points (see framework). At this moment, the programme works in 140 countries with 8 million participants.



Pascale is 46 years old, and since the Award had been introduced in the Netherlands, she is involved with the programme. In 2013, she succeeded Wim van der Laan, who brought the Award to the Netherlands, and became national director of The International Award in the Netherlands.

Q: What is your motivation to lead the Award programme?

A: I get energy from the proud participants and their parents during the Award ceremonies. Because the participants themselves choose to broaden their horizon and live their dreams. I saw youth crossing their borders, for example by overcoming their fear of heights with climbing. But also youth who discovered their talents for music. Youth discover that they can do so much more for themselves and others, which makes them grow. That's beautiful! I am very honoured to be the director of the Award and make the Award more known.

Q: What is the situation of the Award in the Netherlands?

A: The first projects started in 1995 at the Nassau Scholengemeenschap in Breda and the Merlet College in Cuijk. After this Award slowly spread over the Netherlands. The Award projects mostly occur in secondary and high school. Since 2007 the Ministry of Education accepted the Award programme as social internship. I am proud that there are more than 25 projects in the Netherlands, and this amount is growing! Since 2014 we have a collaboration with Scouting Nederland. Both projects match. We also see projects arise in institutions for youth with special needs.

Q: Why should Dutch youth participate with the Award?

A: This is a question people ask me frequently. It is beautiful to see young people grow as a person because they do things they choose themselves and succeed. Hereby they work on their self-esteem,

social environment and they develop their social skills. In our open and international society, these are important skills. The government stimulates international exchanges in the education. By studying or having an internship abroad, students increase their chances on the job market. The international character and the exchange of the Award programme match those demands. By participating in the Award programme, people have the chance to go on an international expedition. With the Award programme, young people get international contacts and experiences. We see youth having their expeditions in Sweden, Germany, England, Nepal and different countries in Africa.

Q: What makes the Award programme unique?

A: The Award programme gives schools and youth care organisations a methodical proven tool with international aspects and great diversity. It has a focus on the positive power which is in every person. The program teaches to broaden horizons and show hidden talents. The programme gives an important contribution to a positive youth policy and voluntary work. There are different examples from participants who stayed as volunteer after their social internship. The Erasmus University started in 2011 with a research to the measurable long term effects of the Award programme.

The Award programme is based on four different segments which appeal to different kinds of interests of the young people. These include sports, individual skills, engagement in the society (service), an adventurous journey and a residential project. The participants set for each segment an own goal, which he/she tries to achieve within a period of (at least) three months by working on it for at least one hour per week. The participants choose their own pace. After achieving the goals, the participant gets a bronze, silver or golden Award. The colour depends on the duration of the participant's goals .

The program of TIAYP has been executed in the Netherlands under the license of IAA for 20 years. The Dutch branch has got an unpaid and voluntary administration. Also there are many volunteers at schools and abroad who supervise the participants and who promote the Award programme.

Q: Who can participate in the Award?

A: Everyone who is 14 – 24 years old is allowed to participate. It doesn't matter where you come from, where you are going to school (or not), or if you live in a youth care. You don't have to have special skills. The Award programme gives everyone a chance to discover their talents and to grow. People can sign up with Awardprojects which already exist, but since 2015 also online on www.award.nl. After signing up we connect a trained Award leader with the participant. This person will assist him or her during participation. This Award leader looks if the youngster has realistic goals. We also ask the Award leader a certificate of good conduct. For participating in the programme the Award asks a contribution of € 32,50 per Award. This money will be spent on the execution of the Award programme in the Netherlands.

Q: What are the benefits for the young people?

A: Because the young people do things they like during the programme, they work unnoticed on their self-esteem, their feeling for responsibility, planning and organisation skills and social awareness. This knowledge and skills make the difference for the rest of their life and our society. The Award programme gives a chance to have an experience in a different country and to make

international contacts. We know a variety of examples of old-participants who mentioned the Award on their CV and had benefits with finding an internship, study or even a job.



Q: What makes you proud?

A: First of all: all the young people who participate at the Award programme. In 2014 we presented a term plan where we set the goal to grow from 600 participants in 2013 to 2600 participants a year in 2016. This is a big challenge for us.

We implement the Award programme in the Netherlands under the license of the International Award Association (IAA). Hereby we can use the international brand and the international network IAA has over the whole world. I am also proud that HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, chairman of the IAA, visits the Netherlands to promote the International Award. This will be a positive input so more and more Dutch youngsters will get a chance to participate with this awesome program!



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