**The International People's College**

**Strategy Outline 2020 – 2025**

# Introduction

In 2011 IPC decided to develop a strategy to ensure that the future development of the school would be based on strategic considerations, a profile based on a clear vision, mission, objectives, core values and thematic focus. The first strategy was implemented from January 2013 to December 2019 and underwent a midterm review in 2016. The revised strategy was developed in 2019.

While the strategy contains an overall thematic focus as well as outlining several focus areas, it is important not to understand these as learning goals *per se*, but rather as formative learning ideals (da. dannelsesidealer). It becomes the framework within which the pedagogical efforts of the school, the lived life at the school and the relations between the school and the world, should develop.

The strategy will enable the school - staff, students and parties with an affinity for the school - to understand and explore the original vision of the place in the context of a world constantly changing by speedy developments, and offer peoples of all ages from across the world a possibility of *becoming* - in *togetherness*. The end can never outpace or overshadow the means.

# IPC Foundation

The International People’s College was founded in 1921 in the wake of World War I, in an effort to promote intercultural understanding and cultural diversity as the foundation for peace, and as a way to counteract xenophobia and stereotypical images of the “other”. With its history of almost one hundred years as a cultural carrier and as a training institution deeply rooted in the Danish Folk High School Movement, IPC has contributed towards building active citizens with global commitments and will continue to do so. The school was appointed an official *United Nations Peace Messenger School* in 1988. At a time when the world is experiencing an increase in conflicts at both local and national levels, peace building remains a core focus area of IPC.

At IPC, the understanding of the Danish Folk High School tradition includes exploration of key concepts like togetherness, advancement of dialogue and academic excellence within a joint framework of the Danish Folk High School legislation and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Both are considered indispensable for the educational and philosophical aim of the school.

IPC continues to base its work on six core values – which continuously need to be expressed and explored to remain relevant for the present generation and which need to be demonstrated in the organisational culture and practices of IPC:

1. **PEACE** – emphasizing peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for life, non-violence and dignity and peace of mind of the individual;
2. **Respect AND OPENNESS** – recognizing that we must respect the differences represented by other people without being judgemental;
3. **Equality** – understood as equal rights of all people, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic background, physical ability, age and religion;
4. **Democracy** – based on principles of consultation, involvement, enablement and empowerment;
5. **Social responsibility** – taking an empathic approach to the needs of others, and working on solutions to shared challenges;
6. **sustainability** – requiring collective stewardship at both local, national and global levels;

# Context

The world is rapidly changing, and new global trends have emerged since the previous IPC strategy 2013-2019 was developed. On a positive note world leaders at the General Assembly of the UN adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradations, prosperity and peace and justice. Most importantly the Goals all interconnect in order to leave no one behind.

Some changes and trends that have occurred are of particular importance for the education and formation facilitated at IPC. These trends affect our understanding of the world we currently live in, the individual experiences of the students and the possibilities and conditions for running the school. As IPC must constantly adapt its work to the context it is a part of, the IPC students, staff, Board and council have identified the following mega-trends and specific trends of particular importance for the coming six years of IPC:

1. Globalisation and economic growth has increased, but so has an alarming level of inequality and polarisation within and between nations. Today inequality is seen as one of the major obstacles for sustainable development and peace globally.
2. Politically, the response has been the shrinking of democratic space and the emergence of nationalistic and populist movements threatening democracy, internationalism and Human Rights.
3. The information and communication revolution, that was brought about by the internet and social media, is giving access to misinformation and fake news, hate speech, and to the creation of communication silos. All of which undermines open, democratic and critical dialogue/debate and a vibrant civil society.
4. The effects of climate change have become increasingly threatening and must be seen as the most urgent global challenge at present. The coming decades are crucial, and people are finally beginning to realise this. Especially the youth are mobilising around sustainability issues around the world and are increasingly challenging politicians and decision makers to take action and save our common future.
5. Struggles and competition between power structures have created changes in the ‘world order’ after the cold war. Opportunities for emerging economies have arisen, however trade war is creating financial instability and threats. A new era of escalating international conflicts is emerging with war taking new forms and means into use.
6. On a positive note the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The 17 SDGs provide a relevant and internationally recognised agenda with commitment from governments, private sector and civil society at both the local, national and international levels leading up to 2030.
7. Due to heavy competition on the education and specially the labour market, young people are under pressure globally. Many feel overwhelmed and disempowered which leads to frustrations and reduced psychological wellbeing. What some students describe as “toxic social media” is increasingly leading to loneliness, lack of self-confidence and loss of a sense of identity among many young people. Resilience, self-confidence and strengthened feeling of agency are in strong demand.

**Overall thematic focus**

**Active Global Citizenship**

Our overall thematic focus continues to be the formation of an active, open and democratic global citizenship culture within societies, communities, institutions and families. We aim at giving a global dimension to what has been the main national focus of Folk High Schools in Denmark for generations – namely building enlightened, engaged, enabled and empowered citizens, who will actively take part in the development of our society for the common good. By focussing on Active Global Citizenship our work goes beyond intellectual learning.

We aim to facilitate, cultivate and promote:

* An understanding of the historic and current dynamics affecting global development.
* An awareness of the wider world and a sense of your own role as an active global citizen.
* A motivation to participate at all relevant levels, from the local to the global.
* A commitment to act by addressing social injustice to promote a more equitable and sustainable world in accordance with the core values of the school.

**Special focus areas in the coming strategy period.**

IPC subscribes to the framework set by the SDGs and acknowledges that sustainability in all its aspects is the major global challenge we face in the coming decades. Based on the current external global trends we have identified and based on our commitment to operate in line with the Danish Folk High School movement as such, IPC has identified four specific focus areas which all relate to the overall strategic focus of ‘Global Citizenship’. The focus areas will provide the overall framework for the studies at IPC in the 2020 - 2025 strategy period. They are interrelated and of equal priority. Given the on-going changes in the external environment and the different compositions of the student groups, the focus on the specific themes may vary over time. The four focus areas for the strategy period 2020 – 2025 primarily fall within the following SDGs: Goal 16) Peace, justice and strong institutions; Goal 10) Reduced inequalities; Goal 13) Climate action and Goal 5) Gender equality.

1. **Peace**

Peace and non-violence are fundamental principles and core values of IPC. The school was originally founded as a peace initiative after World War I. Peace and conflict resolution are permanent subjects in the IPC curriculum. In the coming strategy period IPC will:

* Continue its efforts to contribute to building international understanding based on the principles of respect and non-violence;
* Present theories and philosophies of peace, justice, and non-violence;
* Examine and analyse specific peace processes around the world and analyse best practice examples;
* Be a living example of cross-cultural and peaceful co-existence as an institution and offer a learning space where students can practice peaceful co-existence and develop peace within.

1. **Democracy**

In recent years, we have witnessed emerging tendencies undermining basic pillars of democracy, internationalism and human rights on a global scale. Through its work, IPC will contribute to improving and consolidating democratic values through:

* Exploration of democratic processes in theory and practice from across the world, to illustrate how transparency and accountability are preconditions for well-functioning democracies based on trust;
* Analysis of the role and influence of media and social media, including the analysis of information flows and the use of source critique;
* Present and analyse best practice cases from around the world;
* Evolution of IPC as a role model for a dynamic and inclusive democratic organisation, with open and respectful sharing of opinions based on critical thinking and dialogue.

1. **social and economic justice**

Globalisation and some economic development models have continuously increased inequality in the world. As it is important to understand the obstacles for peace and sustainable development, IPC will, through the curriculum offered, help students to:

* Examine the distribution of resources, wealth and power in the world including the historical backgrounds and underlying interests involved;
* Build an understanding of the many challenges facing the youth and women in the world in particular;
* Promote engagement in combatting social injustice or discrimination based on privilege, power, socio-economic class, religion, sexual orientation, race, physical abilities etc;
* Explore potential strategies at local, national and international level, and find inspiration from best practice cases from around the world;

1. **Sustainability**

IPC will focus on climate change and other environmental concernsas the most threatening and urgent issues of our time. As an institution IPC will strive to promote living within our planetary boundaries and engage whole-heartedly in this issue at all levels, for our students to be able to:

* Analyse, explore and understand the causes and effects of climate change and its interrelationship with other issues within sustainable environment and the importance of leaving no one behind;
* Understand the climate mitigation and adaptation potentials and strategies and the required action at the global, national and individual level, including the roles of different actors;
* Identify ways to contribute to sustainable solutions at personal, local, national and global levels;
* Explore how organising, advocacy and campaigning can impact on climate action, and to call for collective action and accountability at different levels, thus also instilling the understanding and hope that a sustainable future for life on this planet is possible if everyone makes the necessary efforts;

# Overall pedagogical approach and learning objectives

The pedagogical approach at IPC follows the best practices developed by the Danish Folk High School Movement during the past century. The focus is on facilitating the students own general learning, to improve their understanding of concepts and of the external context, to analyse issues and to make choices for their own life as well as to help building their self-confidence, their commitment and their ability to act.

1. IPC´s pedagogical approach takes point of departure in the student’s own resources and experiences. It aims to strengthen their ability to take decisions and to act in collaboration with others in order to make a positive impact on their society and on their own life.
2. IPC offers a participatory approach to learning in which students are actively involved, reflect on their own experiences as well as experiences of others using analytical tools to conceptualise these experiences. Teachers must see themselves as facilitators of learning and offer a great variety of information sources and study approaches.
3. Students will be exposed to a broad spectrum of theoretical thinking and practical examples that can help them understand the topics and which can help them to form their own opinion and develop plans of action. Through democratic dialogue and concrete engagement with different partners, resource persons and actors within and outside the school, students will come to appreciate different perspectives and approaches that can help them to form their own.
4. The IPC institution with its environment and organisational culture will serve as inspiration and provide role models for the students. Together with the teaching this is meant to install a sense of hope and optimism among the students, that change is possible, and that all are important individuals who have a role to play.

# To reach the overall objective and outcome of the learning, IPC has developed a set of learning outcomes that illustrate the desired direction of personal development, which IPC aims at facilitating. The learning outcomes are independent of the specific subjects or issues in focus in the studies of the students.

* Students should better understand the global context in which they live and the issues and opportunities that it presents to them.
* Students should have insights into ways in which groups of citizens organise and seek to influence their environment.
* Students should be more confident of their values and the changes they want to see.
* Students should gain increased self-awareness and self-confidence, improve their understanding of how, where and with whom they can act to make a difference and improve their skills to communicate and organise in order to influence decision makers and promote the change they want.

# Priorities in the composition of Student Body

IPC will seek to have as much diversity in the student group as possible. The global diversity and reality shall be represented in terms of nationalities, ethnicity, economic and social background, religion, gender, different physical abilities and age. Special efforts shall be taken to recruit students from regions and countries that are underrepresented.

A differentiated educational approach will help to respond to the needs of the diverse student body. However, it is important to ensure that the basic qualifications of the enrolled students are in place, so that they have the language capacity necessary to be able to participate in the courses.

# The study environment at IPC

The physical environment at IPC should be of a standard that effectively facilitates the pedagogical approach of the school and underpins the values, upon which the school rests. As the school approaches its 100 years anniversary, it is the ambition of IPC during the 2020 - 2025 strategy period to improve and expand the physical structures of IPC, so we can continue to provide a contemporary, attractive and conducive physical study environment in the future.

It is important that all the core values and the thematic focus of IPC are strongly exemplified in the way the school is managed and demonstrated in the organisational culture and practices of the school at large. Staff at IPC must see themselves as part of a collective effort to provide a learning environment for the students. All staff member will naturally play their respective roles at the school, and must collectively be carriers and promoters of the values of the school.

# IPC and the external environment

IPC sees the external environment at local, national and international levels both as important contextual study objects and as resources of unique knowledge. Both formation and training at IPC aims to enable the students to better understand and critically engage with the political realities in their external environment and to reflect on the knowledge and experiences of how civil society organisations, movements and individuals create change and make a difference.

Students and teachers will actively engage in and support activities carried out by likeminded organisations. Whenever possible they will cooperate with local and national institutions, organisations and individuals to learn from their diverse experiences and different perspectives and help create synergy through collective action at various levels.

IPC will work to build relationships and collaboration with a resource base of organisations and individuals - including former IPC students - who can contribute to the education at IPC with relevant experiences from their own life and experiences. Long term institutional cooperation should be based on shared values, similar or complementary identities and strive to ensure mutual benefit.

# Internal organisation

**Governance.**

As an institutional role model IPC strives to have a transparent governance system in place promoting involvement and accountability by clearly identifying goals and priorities and the responsibility of respective IPC stakeholders in fulfilling their respective mandates.

The *School Council* is IPC’s highest authority and consists of members, who guide the overall strategic direction of the school and who help the school to network with other institutions, organisations and individuals. On an individual basis the members can provide political and professional support to the school. The Council elects *the Board* from among its members. The Board is responsible to the School Council and the Danish authorities for the overall leadership and economy of IPC. The *Principal* is responsible to the Board and has mandated responsibility for the management of the school including staff, pedagogy and economy.

## Human, Financial and Physical Resources

In order to fulfil its mandate IPC needs qualified human - as well as adequate financial - resources. It is essential for the quality of services provided that IPC works with a stable financial framework. The income of IPC depends to a large extent on the number of students that IPC can attract to its long and short courses. The number of students ultimately determines the income from tuition fees as well as the government subsidy provided by the Danish Ministry of Culture. IPC has managed to build a steady economy, which has drastically improved job security for its employees.

Incomes in the coming six years will come from the following five main sources with the bulk of our incomes coming from the first two sources above:

* 1. Regular government contribution.
  2. Tuition fees from students.
  3. Project funding.
  4. Private fundraising – in relation to construction of buildings and scholarships.
  5. Renting out facilities mainly to other like-minded organisations or institutions.

The IPC physical facilities are a key resource and the basis for future development of school activities. The facilities comprise of the park and the buildings with their location in the outskirts of the town of Elsinore. The buildings comprise of classrooms, student quarters, library, kitchen, offices, leisure and sports facilities and staff houses as well as IT and other equipment to support the smooth and efficient running of the school and support activities of students and staff. The size and quality of the facilities determine the working environment for students and staff and affects the ability of the school to rapidly adapt to changes in numbers and composition of the student body. Ensuring a good quality of these facilities contributes to the schools competitive ‘edge’ with respect to attracting students and teachers.

The school has developed a new and up-to-date digital portal helping with administration of applications, timetables, students’ class choices and attendance, calendar, evaluations, certificates and much more. To improve and expand on the physical structures of IPC, plans have been developed for new and bigger classrooms, a multi-purpose hall, new party room, new music room, new student kitchen, several new lounge facilities, fitness room to be built in the 2020 – 2025 strategy period involving considerable efforts into fundraising from trust funds. Particular emphasis is given to make the school structures accessible for differently abled people.

The 100 years jubilee of International People’s College in 2021 will be celebrated and the school will use this opportunity to promote its uniqueness locally and globally. The school has planned several publications and hopes to invite a wide range of former students and staff members, collaboration partners and friends of the school for a number of celebration events.

To strengthen the diversity within the student body, IPC continuously encourages cooperation with Friends of IPC with whom the ambition of raising a substantial amount for scholarships in connection with the 100-year-jubilee of the school in 2021 has been set.

As an institution for learning, IPC aims to attract high calibre individuals with strong professional credentials to work in an international environment as teachers and facilitators. Likewise efficient IPC’s administrative and support staff is essential to sustain the regular daily operations. All IPC staff should combine relevant technical expertise, broad professional experience and strong interpersonal skills in order to engage, challenge and motivate our students to embark on joint reflection and learning in theory and practice thereby instilling a sense of responsibility and responsiveness across the school community. IPC also aims to recruit and retain staff with both Danish and international experience and of different nationalities. They are dedicated team players willing to respond to student interests and ideas while supporting fellow colleagues. IPC provides a stimulating work environment and commits to provide relevant opportunities for professional growth and development for all staff groups in order to respond to the many challenges of developing IPC curriculum, engaging in cooperation at different levels, servicing new students and maintaining IPC as an attractive venue for reflection and learning.

Changes in IPCs approaches to learning and in the types and sizes of courses offered may result in a change in the use of facilities or adjustment of structures. Rising prices on energy for heating and light may establish a need for more efficient systems and the rapid development of IT technology may call for an upgrading in order to offer the best opportunities to integrate IT in the IPCs approaches to learning.

In view of the global urgency to address the issues of climate change, clean energy and waste management IPC needs to show, promote and practise sustainable, environmental- and energy- friendly and efficient practices at individual and institutional levels. In order to contribute to a more sustainable future IPC needs to continuously revisit and further develop its modus operandi while aiming at being economically viable.

All staff departments have an obligation to work with the overall strategic focus of Active Global Citizenship and the 4 focus areas. Especially the sustainability focus will have direct effect on the work of all departments. IPC will constitute subcommittees working with each focus area. The subcommittees will have representation from different departments*.*

# Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy

The IPC strategy provides the overall framework for planning and priority setting in the period from January 2020 to December 2025. Implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of the Board, who will monitor and report the progress and deviations of IPC towards achieving its strategic goals to the School Council on an annual basis.

In addition to the Strategy, IPC will develop a rolling 3-year plan, which lists actions and items with a detailed budget for the first year and indicative budgets for the whole period. Detailed annual plans are prepared by IPC staff and all departments. All plans feed into the 3-year plan, which is revised every year in December by IPC for approval by the Board.

IPC will revise its monitoring and evaluation framework to enable it to capture the most significant changes taking place. It is the responsibility of the management to conduct two written evaluations annually after spring and autumn term. The data collected will be compiled in an annual report submitted to the Board for discussion during its annual all-day meeting every January.

The four overall objectives and desired outcomes of the learning at IPC (chapter 5) are the most important points in the overall monitoring system. The system shall be able to capture the development that each student undergoes during their stay at IPC in relationship to the 4 objectives and be able to quantify and report on the aggregated results. The monitoring system will be based on ‘before and after’ self-assessments of students, and assessments by teachers and other staff, while the students are at IPC. These assessments will also be related to the overall thematic focus and the four thematic focus areas (chapter 4). The monitoring system will also attempt to look at larger impact of the learning through regular ‘tracer studies’ of selected groups of former students.

Specific on-going assessment of the four focus areas will be carried out by the training staff and management and be based also on inputs from students. These will focus on the applied pedagogical approach and the applied content of the training related to the outlined focus of each focus area (chapter 4). These evaluations will be reported annually by each of the 4 thematic focus groups to the Board. During the strategy period specific focus areas may be selected for evaluation with external participation.

Other parts of the strategy such as ‘human, financial and physical resources’, study environment’, ‘relationship with external environment’ and ‘compositions of students’ will be reported on by the Principal to the Board on agreed intervals and to the Council on an annual basis.

# Achievements reached during IPCs first strategy period

# The IPC strategy 2013-19 proved to be a good tool to guide the management, development and profiling of IPC. Today, IPC is in many ways a strong and well-managed institution. Among the major achievements during this strategy period, the following should be mentioned:

* Growth in number of yearly students **(**1 student for 40 weeks**)** has increased from 82,6 students in 2012 to 115 in 2018. The annual financial turnover has increased from around 14,3 million DKK in 2012 to 20 million in 2019, and the financial reserves of IPC have increased with 6,6 million DDK within the same period.
* The education provided by IPC has been changed to match the new thematic focus, staff with the relevant competencies has been recruited and the budget for their in-service training has been boosted ten times of what it was previously.
* Major renovations of the physical infrastructure have taken place, in order to improve the study environment, and work has been done to reduce the ecological footprint of the school.
* External communication and marketinghas been boosted and professionalised,and anew visual identity has been implemented.
* Collaboration with the local community in Elsinore has increased considerably and so has the collaboration with other Folk High Schools. Cooperation with the IPC Alumni is also enhanced and IPC Alumni have developed a scholarship fund to benefit future students.

The revised strategy will set the overall direction for IPC from January 2020 to December 2025. It will serve as a communication tool for internal and external stakeholders and as an overall management and monitoring tool. It should be flexible enough to adapt to on-going changes within the overall framework. A mid-term review will give possibilities for revision and changes if found necessary. IPC management and staff will, in collaboration with the Board, develop three-year operational work plans as well as policies and IPC staff will develop inspirational guidelines to operationalize the four focus areas. A monitoring system will be developed as soon as the Strategy has been approved.

As we approach the 100-year anniversary of IPC in 2021, IPC continues its commitment to contribute to a peaceful, just and sustainable world and to develop and improve the school´s capacities to respond to contemporary challenges and emerging opportunities.

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Discussed and approved by IPC School Council, Elsinore, 23rd of November 2020

Signed by

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Nina Ilona Ellinger Toni Solveig Michelsen Søren Launbjerg

IPC School Council Chair IPC Board Chair IPC Principal