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Intercultural understanding and Respect

Intercultural Understanding and Respect

Modern families are so unique and diverse. They bring together in one household, cultural perspectives, notions, traditions, heritage and sometimes genetic make-up from different parts of the world. We have often heard of the term 'third culture' children or children who have spent a large part, or all of their growing up years outside of their parents' culture and country. And if the country they are brought up in is as diverse as Singapore, they grow up in a culturally unique and truly international context that shapes their life experiences.



As educators, we have a very important responsibility of engaging and imbibing this cultural diversity into learning experiences so that children embrace internationalism and at the same time form self concepts rooted in their own cultural context.

When we started EtonHouse, we had children from many different nationalities. But never did we imagine that we would one day have more than 61 different nationalities represented in our campuses in 9 countries across Asia. It is this cultural perspective and collaboration between children from different geographical and cultural contexts, that gives our education a unique richness. It also strengthens language skills and most importantly social skills amongst children, not to mention a deep rooted sense of empathy, respect and understanding for people of different cultures and nationalities. We strongly believe that a high quality early years programme in a nurturing learning environment, not only lays the foundation for a bright future but also a stronger, more peaceful society with strong emotional and social connections.

There are however challenges when the social context is so diverse. We as adults are constantly learning something new and revisiting our notions of diversity, of families that are unique, traditions that

are new and unheard of. Sometimes this requires us to change our thinking, take risks and embrace diversity as it is and develop a sense of understanding and respect. Our educators thus consciously create an environment that embraces this diversity, fosters understanding and creates a culturally unique learning environment. It is a delight when students from one EtonHouse campus interact with children in another in a different country. They learn from their individual experiences and the classroom comes alive with such collaborations and interactions.

You will find a truly wonderful collection of articles in this edition of the newsletter from our campuses all over Asia that celebrate intercultural understanding and respect as one of the key tenets of our education. I would also like to take this opportunity to share with you a very significant development. We recently signed the international network agreement with Reggio Emilia, the renowned pre-schools in Italy. I am excited and greatly humbled by this development and hope that this collaboration will add greater richness to our children's learning journey at EtonHouse.



Hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Ng Gim Choo
Group Managing Director
EtonHouse International Education Group

Reggio International Network-First in Asia

EtonHouse has signed the agreement with Reggio Children to start the Asia chapter of the Reggio Children International Network. The Reggio Children International Network is present in many parts of the world, representing the various reference points of Reggio Children. Some of the network's reference points are the NAREA in North America, REAIE in Australia, Red SOLARE of the Latin American countries, and so on. It is a privilege for EtonHouse to be the first organisation in the region to establish this relationship with Reggio Children and be given the opportunity to support, uphold, sustain and disseminate the values, culture and heritage of the Reggio Emilia approach in Asia.



left to right: Emanuela Vercalli - Co-Chair, Reggio Children International Network, Emelia Prayogo-Director of Pedagogy, EtonHouse, Mrs. Ng Gim Choo-Group Managing Director, EtonHouse, Carla Rinaldi-President of Reggio Children, Amelia Gambetti - Co-Chair, Reggio Children International Network and Paola Ricco - responsible for Professional Development, Reggio Children International Network

The Reggio Emilia Approach has been hailed by Newsweek as the best in the world, and though there are several pre-schools in Singapore and the region who draw on the principles of this approach, there are no professional development initiatives for educators to 'learn' this approach.

The international network organizations thus help to share the principles of this approach (amongst pre-schools that are inspired by this thinking) as well as bring to the various regions exhibitions and speakers from Reggio Emilia. With the start of this network in Singapore, these opportunities will now be made available to educators in Singapore and

the region.

The signing of the agreement is a culmination of years of collaboration with Reggio Children and the International Network through various conferences, visits, professional development sessions, exchanges and dialogues. In March 2010, EtonHouse along with AECES brought the first Reggio Children conference to Singapore. A second conference was held successfully in 2012. This agreement will be the beginning of more collaboration, research and knowledge sharing between EtonHouse and Reggio Emilia and the International Network. There are plans to organise conferences in Singapore, China and in other countries in the region as well as bring the 'Wonder of Learning' exhibition to this part of the world for the very first time. The multiple possibilities and opportunities that this would bring to EtonHouse and the community of early childhood educators in Asia are indeed exciting!

EtonHouse International School opens in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

EtonHouse International School in Phnom Penh opened its doors for the very first time in January this year. Located in the heart of Beoung Kheng Kang, this campus sits on 11,200 square foot of land, has generous outdoor spaces and offers children engaging learning spaces and high quality programmes for children from the nursery to primary levels.

Says Mr. Daniel Li, founder of EtonHouse International School Cambodia, "I am very excited about bringing this new philosophy in international education to Cambodia. It will not only set new standards, but more importantly will offer children residing here an opportunity to learn in an exceptional environment. Being a part of EtonHouse, also offers opportunities for the children and staff of EtonHouse Cambodia to interact, learn and share with their



peers in other EtonHouse campuses around the world, thus adding more colour and diversity to their learning environment and inculcating international mindedness amongst them"

Mrs. Ng Gim Choo, Founder and Group Managing Director of the EtonHouse International Education Group added "EtonHouse is very excited to be in Cambodia. When we open a school in a new country, our aim is to first understand its people, its culture and then partner with like minded people who share our philosophy in education. We are very happy to be working with Daniel and his team to bring this wonderful learning space to Cambodia. We hope to be able to collaborate with families, staff and the people of Phnom Penh to offer an inspiring international education for global learners",

Seoul EtonHouse to open new British Prep School in Hannam, Seoul

A new co-educational British Preparatory School will be opened in Hannam, central Seoul in August 2013. The first of its kind in Korea, EtonHouse Prep will cater for children from Nursery (aged 3-4) to Year 8 (aged 12-13). The school will prepare students for entry into top Independent Senior schools in Asia, as well as Independent Boarding schools in the UK.

The third of EtonHouse Korea's educational ventures in Seoul, the school will be housed in a 20,000 square foot building with outstanding facilities, including a gymnasium/ballet studio, a well-stocked library with ICT, a music and drama hall,



six music practice rooms, a cookery and science laboratory and an art studio.

Students will broadly follow the English National Curriculum (ENC) and International Primary Curriculum (IPC). They will be offered diverse languages programme, including Mandarin, Korean, French and Latin. In addition, a broad extra-curricular programme will include activities such as ballet, chess, cookery, football, gymnastics and drama.

EtonHouse Prep will offer a distinctive British Preparatory School education, and aims to build confidence, self-assurance and a passion for learning amongst its students, preparing them for life at senior school and beyond.

EtonHouse to open its first campus in Shanghai, China



EtonHouse will open its first campus in Shanghai in September 2013. Located in the heart of Pudong in Lujiazui, EtonHouse International Pre-School in Shanghai will offer young children aged 18 months to 6 years old a thoughtfully considered and aesthetically designed beautiful learning environment with generous outdoor spaces. The campus will offer the renowned EtonHouse Inquire - Think - Learn curriculum inspired by the infant and toddler centres in Reggio Emilia in Italy.

The integrated and stimulating programme at the campus will offer children an engaging and meaningful learning environment where they will develop into confident, competent, responsible and multilingual global citizens.

Log on to <http://sh.etonhouse.com.cn>

Intercultural Understanding and Respect through Children's Eyes

by Emelia Prayogo, Director of Pedagogy

With accelerating globalization and increasing interaction between people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the question is how to foster intercultural understanding and respect. The current wave of globalization will reinvent many cities, making them more diverse than in the past. This effect can be a double-edged sword; magical with a heightened sense of diversity or adaptability, but undoubtedly concerning in some cases, where there is a loss of identity or sense of belonging.

Over the years, this situation has become increasingly familiar to us. Intercultural exchanges emerge when crossing boundaries is inevitable. Meeting new friends, getting to know new places, adapting to unfamiliar cultures and acquiring new languages are some of the many changes families have to encounter today. Since this can be immensely intense, we would like to dedicate this topic of intercultural understanding to emphasize the importance of seeing this from our children's point of view.

Can someone inform me what's going on, please?

This question is very much relevant to a child when he or she feels there is a change of rhythm around them. Although being anxious is considered to be a normal reaction to an environmental condition or stimulus, it is highly suggested for families to communicate to their children about changes that might occur, in accordance to the child's level of understanding.

Will my new friends like me?

Children have the capability of forming friendships at a very young age, and for some, it can be pretty upsetting to know they will have to say goodbye to the friends they are used to. The feeling of missing friends is real and sensitive. It needs appropriate

ways of communication to handle and make sure their feelings are being heard.

Where do I belong?

Without constant communication to reinforce a sense of connection to the place and its people, children may face the risk of loss of identity. Critical cultural awareness and experiential learning (both at home and abroad) are key elements in the journey toward global citizenship, intercultural



communicative competence, and a broader, more balanced, sense of self. Intercultural citizenship, which favors multiculturalism and equality, requires awareness and respect of self and other, the desire to interact across cultures, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills that facilitate constructive, active participation in today's complex society.

According to Alred, Byram, and Flemming (2006), Byram (2006, 2008b, 2009), Guilherme (2002, 2007) and other interculturalists, it is possible to become competent in intercultural (communicative) and intercultural citizenship if individuals cultivate the understandings (e.g. cultural knowledge, open mindset) and skills (e.g. cultural-sensitive behaviors, cultural-learning strategies).

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Intercultural Understanding and Respect - A Focus on the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)

EtonHouse @ Orchard

by Kate Farrell, Assistant Pre-School Director/PYP Coordinator & Leanne Sunarya, Senior Pre-School Director

The attributes of the IB Learner Profile are central to the development of a person who is to exhibit international mindedness. We believe the attribute of a learner who strives to be open-minded encapsulates the idea of intercultural understanding and respect. Open minded is defined by the IB as being "able to



understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, learners are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience".

traditions and adopt new points of view. When children have opportunities to be open-minded, they can consider perspectives of others that are different from their own and truly become global citizens.



Over the course of a year, we have observed children purposefully engaged in a variety of experiences as they explore different cultural celebrations and traditions authentically with the support of our parent community. Parents share their culture and traditions from their home countries. The experiences are unique and ever changing from one class to the other as we embrace the diversity of the learning community. The children's open-mindedness and creativity are elicited in each of the experiences. They are able to appreciate different cultural customs and



International Mindedness in the School Community

EtonHouse @ Broadrick

by Atima Joshi, Vice-Principal/PYP Coordinator

*Wouldn't it be terrible? Wouldn't it be sad?
If just one single color was the color that we had?
If everything was purple?
Or red? Or blue? Or green?
If yellow, pink, or orange was all
that could be seen?
Can you just imagine how dull world would be
If just one single color was all we got to see?*
• Shane DeRolf

Intercultural diversity and respect hold the key to the strategic objective of education in society. The International Baccalaureate (IB) strives to 'develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.' This international-mindedness implies a deeper thought and emphasis than mere tolerance and sensitivity to other cultures. It emphasises on the Learner Profile attribute of being open-minded and respectful towards cultures; it emphasises the celebration of the knowledge, values and attitudes that different cultures bring to us. The celebration requires a sense of pride in our own identities as well as a sense of joy towards the others.



As educators, we have to plan a curriculum that helps learners discover the varied and valuable contributions towards development of human society. The IB programmes provide learners with opportunities to reflect on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives. Through engaging in the Units of Inquiry, the learners explore and identify the varied perspectives on relevant issues, and in the process learn about themselves and the others.

Our Units of Inquiry on the transdisciplinary theme "Who we are" from Nursery 1 to Year 6 help children develop a sense of identity as well as respect for others. It is these practices combined that help us define our core values.



The school culture at EtonHouse Broadrick is built on two main pillars:

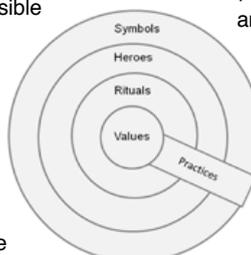
- Our concept of Who We Are (the type of people we want to be as individuals, as a group of people, as citizens);

And

- Our Philosophy of Learning.

When using Hofstede's onion model of culture to understand our own school culture, it becomes evident that intercultural understanding and respect is fundamental to the culture at EtonHouse Broadrick and is visible in the daily practices at school.

(Retrieved 9 March 2013 from <http://marcelwendland.blogspot.sg/p/internationalleadership.html>)



It is evident in our multi-lingual displays all around the school, classroom door displays in Japanese, translations of workshop material in Mandarin, Learner Profile display in different languages, varied cultural attires, different languages spoken in the playground, staffroom and the classrooms, diverse food and religious beliefs..... the list is endless.

Staff, children and parents at EtonHouse Broadrick are also encouraged to model the Learner Profile attributes. Each positive action, be it helping a friend tie a shoe lace or picking up rubbish from the field, becomes noteworthy. Our heroes range from our students who have been youngest speaker in the IB conference to our Soccer team players who display impeccable sporting spirit in the soccer field, to teachers walking the Pink Ribbon walk to aid Breast Cancer patients, to

parent volunteers helping us in organising our reading cupboards and other school events.

The many annual celebrations, including Lunar New Year, Mooncake Festival, Diwali, Holi, Japanese Children's Day, UN day, Christmas, Easter, etc, are colourful reminders of our diversity. Other 'traditions' of EtonHouse Broadrick include the yearly 'Sundowner' for parents, a 'tug of war' between the parents and teachers at every Primary Sports day, Year 1 and Year 6 graduations, Concerts, Sports Days, Staff lunch for Christmas and End of year celebrations, staff-morning teas, etc. Curriculum celebrations have also recently expanded to include the Year 4 Poetry Café and the EtonHouse Mall by Year 3's. The Poetry Café was a setting for a beautiful example of the school community being open-minded and respectful when a student's grandfather sang an impromptu poem for the multilingual audience in his native language, much to the delight of an appreciative audience!

The school camps in Years 4, 5 and 6 help children develop independence and self-awareness along with fostering a sense of mutual respect which helps make our children open-minded, tolerant and sensitive towards each other as well as the environment. The Year 6 Penang Camp, in particular, allows children to immerse in the Malay culture as they experience local cuisine, local crafts and in general the local cultural and social environment.

Indeed, at EtonHouse International School, we are a respectful, principled and caring community, providing a collaborative, stimulating and challenging environment where inquiry, innovation and life-long learning are nurtured.



Respect and Appreciation for Diversity

EtonHouse @ 717 Mountbatten Road

by Renee Sim-Centre Supervisor, and June Loo & Chan Siu Wen-Class Teachers



A strong sense of cultural identity is essential to children so that they understand who they are and where

they belong.

The children in our campuses are from all over the world with different cultural backgrounds. We focus on small group learning experiences to strengthen children's social skills, and to build on

their understanding and respect for various social and cultural groups.

Annual cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Haji and Diwali involve children and families from all cultural backgrounds. During these events, children are introduced to

different traditional food, songs and even games. They learn to respect and understand the uniqueness of the various cultures in the society in which they live.

Using Chinese New Year as an example, an inquiry began as we shared stories and



songs about the festival with the children. They were especially interested in the lion dance as it symbolizes happiness, prosperity and good luck. Every child was invited to share their interpretation of the lion dance through a music and movement experience. Through such experiential learning, children develop respect and appreciation for diversity.



Collaboration through Inquiry

EtonHouse @ 764 Mountbatten Road

by Joy Tan, Assistant Preschool Director, EtonHouse Pre-School, 764 Mountbatten Road



Throughout the year, we host a diverse range of festive celebrations for children and their families. These celebrations reflect our acknowledgement and respect of the various cultures, and serve to share with both adults and children the significance and values of the other cultures.

As global citizens of the future, children need to be able to relate and communicate effectively with a diverse group of people, and to develop intercultural sensitivity in order to be successful individuals. Intercultural competency is a critical skill especially since advanced technology has

opened vast opportunities for communication, work and entertainment across and around the world.

Starting in school, children learn to partner with peers of diverse ethnicities to achieve common goals, problem solve and to celebrate success.



Building Intercultural Understanding and Respect Amongst Our Parent Community

EtonHouse @ Claymore

by Lisamarie Hughes, Pre-School Director, EtonHouse International Pre-School Claymore

Being an International Pre-School, we welcome diverse families and embrace the many contexts, experiences and backgrounds that they bring. With this in mind, we plan opportunities throughout the year to bring parents together to share and look through each other's lenses.

For example, we host coffee afternoons for parents from new families to meet and share individual experiences as well as explore the values behind our philosophy. With the pre-school as an anchor, parents and staff respect each other's differences and share a common vision.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy in which parental involvement is vital, EtonHouse highly values participation by parents and partnership

between home and school.

This is constructed and lived day by day in encounters with others and in our interpersonal relationships (Reggio Children. p.10. 2010 Indications: pre-schools and infant toddler centres of the municipality of reggio emilia. Reggio Children: Italy).

Formal and informal encounters with parents are encouraged through events, participation in children's development and daily exchanges to construct interpersonal relationships and promote



intercultural understanding.

Partnering with Parents in an Intercultural Community

EtonHouse @ Outram

by Yvelyn Tan, Senior Teacher & Chia Bee Yong, Pre-School Director



At EtonHouse Outram, parents are invited to our celebrations as active participants. We foster strong partnerships with families, with the recognition that interactions between educators and families have a direct impact on children's learning and development.

During Racial Harmony day, classrooms were decorated in different ethnic themes (e.g. Chinese, Indian, Japanese etc) to help children understand various aspects of the different cultures. In the 'Chinese Room', a parent taught children the proper way of holding chopsticks. The children then practised picking up rice with chopsticks. At the same time, one of the Mandarin teachers gave a demonstration of Chinese Tea preparation. In the 'Indian Room', a parent demonstrated decorating the floor with Rangoli while another taught children to make pooji. The children tried their hands at making their own Rangoli and pooji. In the

'Japanese Room', parents came in their traditional Japanese costumes and brought Japanese food for the children to try.

These multi-cultural experiences help teachers, parents and children develop stronger bonds as



they work together to plan the activities, while learning to respect and appreciate the different cultures. These reciprocal relationships provide a positive environment for children's growth and development and fosters internationalism amongst young learners



Internationalism within our PYP Pre-School

EtonHouse @ Newton

by Victoria McPherson, PYP Coordinator, Newton

Internationalism has many facets within a PYP school. One of them is its strong coupling with the PYP attitude of Perspective. This attitude encourages members of the school community to 'stand in the shoes' of another, to see and try to understand another's point of view.

There are over 30 different nationalities at EtonHouse Newton, and each individual - student, teacher or parent - brings to the school an enormous range of experiences - life, cultural, country and global - that together create a universal outlook.

Parents are consistently invited to the pre-school to share their many varied experiences. Not only



does this give children the thrill of sharing their learning with a parent, it also builds empathy, strengthens connections, as well as builds holistic understanding and empathy of differences.

EtonHouse Newton is fortunate to have as a parent, the Global Internal Communications Manager for the 2013 Earth Hour, who is currently coordinating with the staff of EtonHouse schools to take action and do our part in building a healthier planet and a better place for us to live in.

The 'I will if you will...' Earth Hour pledge is a statement that children appreciate and understand. It enhances their understanding of each other, their role in society and connections to the environment and to each other.

Enhancing Cultural Awareness through Play

EtonHouse @ Vanda

by Ng Shu Ping, Pre-school Director, EtonHouse Pre-School Vanda



EtonHouse aims to promote cultural diversity through our programme and curriculum. There is a rapidly growing population of children from culturally diverse backgrounds in our pre-schools, and our play-based curriculum allows for varied and meaningful opportunities for the children to interact with one another.

During the recent Lunar New Year, children, families and teachers at EtonHouse Vanda came together to share their understanding of the



traditional festival. Teachers brought the outside world into the classrooms through the use of materials and shared experiences. At the invitation of the teachers, many families, both local and foreign, visited Chinatown to soak in the atmosphere of the festival. The children returned to school, bringing photographs and artefacts, eager to share about their individual experiences with their peers. At the pretend play area, children dressed up in ethnic costumes such as cheong sum and samfoo. Cooking and music were also ways to promote cultural diversity. The pre-nursery children explored the taste and texture of mandarin oranges. The nursery and kindergarten children



made dumplings and cookies, as part of their learning experiences. The children danced with fans, scarves, silk and



lion heads. All these experiences helped children to immerse themselves in this wonderfully rich tradition and supported their understanding of the connections between culture, food, music and celebrations.

Intercultural Understanding and Diversity in International Schools

EtonHouse @ Chengdu

by Carol Hutchinson, Principal, EtonHouse Times Residence



EtonHouse offers a curriculum that is taught by dedicated and qualified local and international teachers who are very committed to both their own professionalism and the development of 'international mindedness' amongst children. EtonHouse aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, caring young people who will create a better, more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

How do we encourage our children to be international-minded? What does it mean? There are many different definitions and meanings. Some may define it around themes such as securing peace and eradicating poverty, others believe it is a journey from 'self' to 'other'. We can teach our children to develop a strong sense not only of themselves and their own identity which is crucial, but alongside that a deep sense of awareness of other people, cultures, customs, and countries.

Our inquiry curriculum allows children to inquire and develop these skills and our learner profile contributes to these attributes. Children in our classrooms are aware and recognize that the other children may come

from a different culture or country, but they are able to sit and play together and form friendships. In our school environment, we promote international mindedness through our teaching, classroom environment, events and themes. Every year, EtonHouse Times Residence in Chengdu holds an International Day which brings all families from different backgrounds and cultures together.



Reflection of Multi-Cultural Understanding

EtonHouse @ Jinan

by Lucy.Qu, Vice Principal and Aurelio Gonzalas, International Teacher



EtonHouse learner outcome 1

The Child as Social/Cultural Being-Understanding Self and Others.

- An understanding of and respect for various social and cultural groups and the role they and others play within the group.

At EtonHouse Jinan, teachers support children to interact with others in the environment, treat others with care and respect, and show respect

for similarities and differences.

Many different festivals including Mid-Autumn Festival, Halloween, Christmas, and Chinese New Year are celebrated to let children learn about different cultures. This allows children to demonstrate appreciation of themselves and to recognize their roles as well as the role of others within the context of a broader community.

To celebrate Mothers' Day, mothers came to school wearing their own traditional clothes. Teachers and children also wore their traditional clothes, including the hanbok and qipao.

Cultural differences can vary widely in classrooms, especially ones with international

students. Even people who appear to share identical cultural characteristics may have completely different customs. This is partly due to the fact that some cultures have "sub-cultures"

with its own set of customs. Thus, it is important that children have a firm understanding of cultural differences and what it means to others. One of the best ways to get children to understand the

concept of cultural differences is for them to learn about different holidays that they are perhaps not familiar with. This allows them to relate, as well as to compare and contrast their own experiences with holidays and customs.





It's Our Time to Shine!

EtonHouse @ Wuxi

by Mrs. Betty Brown, Principal



Teachers from EtonHouse Wuxi are from all around the world, and thanks to the school's Early Years Coordinator, Ms Karen Cooke, they have a practice of sharing and celebrating with students and the community traditional celebrations that are held in their home countries.

Throughout the year, multi-media displays are used to engage and support children's learning not only in the classrooms but also as they make connections in the different units of



work they inquire into.

Having a composition of 18 nationalities of children and 12 nationalities of teachers, EtonHouse Wuxi has been treated to

celebrations from around the world that would not normally be acknowledged in a national educational system, thus highlighting the international mindedness within the school community. Children, parents and visitors to the school are respectful, empathetic, tolerant and curious of the various cultures.

There is an International corner in



the campus to acknowledge various cultural celebrations, e.g. Autumnal Equinox Day (Japan), Thanks Giving (Canadian and USA), Armistice Day (Worldwide), Diwali (India), Day of Reconciliation (South Africa), Australia Day, Waitangi Day (N.Z.).... And many more!



We are the Role Models for Intercultural Understanding and Respect

EtonHouse @ Yiwu

by Jenny Wong, Principal



'Intercultural understanding and respect' encompasses more than acknowledging, organizing and participating in the celebrations of different cultures and nationalities. Though these experiences provide opportunities to celebrate the uniqueness of every child and facilitate in children an understanding of 'international

mindedness', equally important is the need for intercultural understanding and respect to be demonstrated in the daily behaviour, attitudes and beliefs that teachers, support staff, administrators and leaders in our schools display in our daily interactions with children, families and our world at large. This needs to be embedded in the very culture of our schools.

We are all role models for our children. As role models, we must always demonstrate in all our interactions with others the importance of tolerance, acceptance, respect and a clear understanding that we

care about all in our world. We are the ones that lead our children to 'become true global citizens of the world with a genuine understanding of international mindedness.'



Discovering International Cultures

EtonHouse @ Zhuhai

by Tim Pearson, English Language Teacher



In recent years, Zhuhai has become increasingly international and this has brought a noticeable shift in the values and ideas that are instilled in pre-school education. Western ideas are not only appreciated but also embraced, they are incorporated into the curriculum alongside traditional Chinese values and customs. At EtonHouse Zhuhai, we feel truly privileged as children and teachers from all over the world sit side by side, learning from each other day in, day

out.

One of our most popular activities, with both children and parents, is our foreign culture week. Each class celebrates the culture of a different country and we submerge ourselves in its customs. Traditional food, dress, music and dance are all present and entering one of our classrooms is almost like entering a country. In fact the children have their very own EtonHouse

passports to record all of the places that they have been.

Of course providing such diversity is not without its challenges but with the help of our experienced faculty and an understanding group of parents, we are confident that we are encouraging in children a sense of empathy, respect and a deep rooted understanding of different cultures across the globe.

Learning about the World's Cultures

EtonHouse @ India

At Vivero, Mumbai, we believe that right attitudes and values develop when we are able to foster a healthy respect for each other. Our curriculum adopts a broad, balanced view, integrating intercultural differences within all subjects, and life at school.



We often integrate culture-specific events or practices within the classroom as part of a unit studied. Sharing of images and objects from various cultures is encouraged so that children develop an understanding and appreciation for the interrelationship between the world they live in and its inhabitants.

A number of our artwork and cultural displays, including the children's own work, are drawn from different cultural traditions. Our children recently created a 'Multi-cultural Box'. The box contained information on each child's culture and customs, which he/she shared with the rest of the class. Empty shoe boxes were decorated with a wealth of

objects depicting the rich and diverse cultures that make up our school. Each child explained the importance of the objects placed in his/her box.

This activity allowed children to develop their own aesthetic perceptions about different cultures.

They were able to point out similarities and differences across the cultures discussed. It not only helped them understand their peers better, but also left them with a greater awareness of their interconnectedness.

At Vivero, Pune, various in-class activities are used as creative engagements to promote intercultural understanding and respect. A recent 'Paint a Flag'



experience saw children work in groups to identify the country of origin of a peer in the group. They then proceeded to identify, and artistically create the flags of their peer's country of origin like South Korea, United Kingdom etc. To extend this intercultural experience, the teacher incorporated a few customs of the identified countries, throughout the day. For example during their break time, children were introduced to Korean dining etiquette.

Through these experiences, we observed that the children were able to acknowledge each other's differences, and display openness and respect towards the cultures of their classmates.

Making Connections EtonHouse @ Japan

by Peter Ackerman, Pre-School Director

Here at EtonHouse International Pre-school Tokyo, we are in an ideal position to encourage our children to gain intercultural understanding through connections between their own world and the worlds of others.

Educators here are always conscious of the need for our programme to meet the needs and be respectful of the different learning styles of our students while reflecting the culture of Japan, our



students, families, and teachers. At the same time, we have to be responsive to the English speaking and Mandarin speaking cultures as these are our languages of instruction.

The children, families, and teachers here reflect a wide spectrum of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. It is crucial for the teachers to bring the outside world into their classrooms through literature, materials, activities, and invitations to children's families.

This school year, our kindergarten teacher who is of African descent informed me that his students were continually asking him about his skin colour, "Why is your skin black?" To respond to the children, I suggested that he do a comparison



between his skin color and some black and brown cardboard and ask the questions, "Why do you keep saying my skin is black?" and "Why do you think I have different coloured skin?" These questions and the interest of the children have led the kindergarten class to embark on a study of anthropology and a project in which they compare, and think about the origins, of different cultures from around the world.



Celebrating Sul Together EtonHouse @ Korea

by Lexi Larcher, Teacher



"Say hay boke-mahn he pah du say oh" is the New Year's greeting in Korea. New Year's Day, known as Sul, is one of the greatest celebrations of the year, and certainly for the children of EtonHouse Bundang. The children and their families celebrated with a large carnival with

booths for various customary games including Zodiac Ball Toss and Dragon Kites. There was also a traditional morning with dumpling soup, rice cake making and folk games. One ancient custom that still remains is the practice of bowing to elders as a sign of respect. This is known as Sebe. Before receiving a decorated little envelope with money tucked inside, the children bowed to their elders gracefully adorned in their bright Hanbok



attire. They sat back and listened to their elder's well wishes and wise words for the New Year.

Appreciating and spending time with family was the highlight of Sul when our diverse community came together for this memorable event.

Culture Plays a Major Role in Child Development

EtonHouse @ Malaysia

by Claire Elizabeth Blake, Pre-School Director



As educators, we need to preserve a specific culture instead of worry about the genetic make-up of one another. We need to ask ourselves: what steps can we make to promote attachment and cohesiveness for children? How do we help the child feel connected to their cultural and racial background and understand their own identity? How can we nurture a culture that offers them stability? This is exactly what our curriculum stands for - making close links with the family and community – creating a sense of belonging.

In essence, children today live with two racial realities – one from their family of origin and one from the ‘family’ that they are educated in. Children appreciate and are stimulated by diversity. Children are our teachers in their belief that difference is not a problem but a gift. Gardner believes that ‘Children have the cosmopolitan gene and the skill of embracing differences.’ We all know as well that mothers from different countries have the same fears, the same worries, and the same hopes concerning their children. The key to the future of our children and of our community lies in the attention to intercultural coexistence in modern society, and to children’s multiple aptitudes and hundred languages.

Intercultural Understanding and Respect

EtonHouse @ Jakarta

by Vera Lie, Pre-school Director



Here at EtonHouse Pre-school Jakarta, we firmly believe in making connections with families and the community,

one of the ways is to acknowledge the multi-racial, multi-religious mix of children and families in our midst and to embrace cultural diversity when planning the school calendar of celebrations.

Active parent involvement and participation in children’s learning is strongly encouraged. During Chinese New Year, parents and families

at EtonHouse Jakarta enjoyed traditional experiences like the lion dance and a range of other activities. The best activity was making dumplings which everyone enjoyed eating!



Even though there is only one Japanese child in EtonHouse Jakarta, we still celebrated the Japanese Children’s Day (Kodomo no hi) in the class that the child is attending. As part of the Kodomo no hi celebration, children made carp kites (koinobori), tasted rice balls, had a story read to them and had music and movement to Japanese songs.

United Nations Day is another important occasion which saw our children all

dressed in costumes representing the many countries of the world. Teachers also participated and took to the stage in ethnic

costumes. Children went around to different countries, using their self-made ‘passports’

which had to be endorsed by the immigration officials at their destinations and learnt about the cultural art work and facts of the



countries, and even cooked and tasted some food from these countries. Again, in these events and celebrations our parents were delighted to be involved.

Many other cultural events are acknowledged and celebrated in our school such as the Indonesian Independence Day, Halloween, Easter, and Diwali.



Preparing our children to be global citizens means imparting them with cultural knowledge, social and interpersonal skills important for functioning in the world. Acceptance and understanding of others is the basis for global peace and harmony.