

Club of Amsterdam

## the future of Learning

February 2014



A collaboration between THINK, the Amsterdam School of Creative Leadership and the Club of Amsterdam.

**The impact of culture on teaching and early learning.**

### Presentations

**Huib Wursten**, Senior Partner, itim International

**Can we introduce "best practices" in education across countries?**

**Emer Beamer**, Social Designer and Educator. Founder at Unexpect, co-founder at Butterfly Works and NairoBits

**What should we teach the next generation?**

Our event will take inspiration and use elements of the **THNK Forum format** which is designed to deepen dialogue and elevate discussion by asking questions and re-framing issues to lead to surprising insights.

### **Beyond the lecture model**

The traditional way to impart knowledge has been the lecture and question-and-answer session. The message is usually completely fixed before it is communicated. The question-and-answer session allows the audience to get clarification and to put in critical comments. But it is also often unfocused, because questions are dealt with haphazardly as they are raised.

### **Going out of our comfort zone**

Participants ask the questions and structure the dialogue; they share the responsibility for an interesting outcome. It requires commitment and courage. The experts in creative leadership are encouraged to ask questions of the participants, to make it a true dialogue; this means it's a two-way street, and participants need to abandon the comfortable position of being the only ones asking questions.

Our **"thought starters"** are:

**Huib Wursten**, Senior Partner, itim International

**Can we introduce "best practices" in education across countries?**

As a result of globalization debates on education are no longer only about the improvement of the local standards. "Best performing countries now set the tone".

Politicians understand that performance in education can determine the economic future of a country. Several systems - like PISA - are used to compare educational quality across countries.

A recent analyses of the Economist Intelligence Unit focused on benchmarking the factors differentiating the highest achievers. They concluded that only a few of these factors could be found. Teaching is still a very local activity and what is happening locally is a black box.

One of the "fashionable" ideas is to make the progress of learners visible by standard tests and to make teachers accountable for the results. The fear of many professionals in the field is that this is leading to "teaching to the test" and that as a result important elements like creativity, critical thinking

and problem solving skills will disappear.

Well-researched systematic differences in value preferences across countries are vital for understanding the way teaching/learning processes are handled.

What we can learn from each other internationally?

**Emer Beamer**, Social Designer and Educator. Founder at Unexpect, co-founder at Butterfly Works and NairoBits

**What should we teach the next generation?**

Many children born today are likely to live to be 100 years old, making the imperative to rethink what they are being taught at school all the more urgent. As many have noted, our current system of education was developed for the Ford generation while now we are moving to what Zygmunt Bauman calls 'liquid modernity'.

What qualities will the next generation need in order to prosper in yet to be invented careers while creating meaningful lives? And could teaching the art of design and invention be a key component of future curricula.

19:00 - 20:00

**THNK welcome and Introduction** by **Kwela Sabine Hermanns**, Core Faculty & Curator at THNK  
Kwela is moderating, curating and guiding the dialogue and discussion.

**Huib Wursten**, Senior Partner, itim International

**Can we introduce "best practices" in education across countries?**

**Emer Beamer**, Social Designer and Educator. Founder at Unexpect, co-founder at Butterfly Works and NairoBits

**What should we teach the next generation?**

**Group Discussion**

20:00 - 20:25

Coffee break with drinks and snacks.

20:25 - 21:15

**Group Discussion / Conclusions / Feedback**



**Huib Wursten**

Senior Partner, itim International

Huib is experienced in translating international and global strategies and policies into practical consequences for management. He has been working in this field since 1989 with a variety of Fortune 1000 companies, with public and private organisations in 85 countries on all continents. His main clients in the business sector are IBM, 3M, Vodafone, McCain, Quest, Texaco, ABN AMRO, Nike, and Unilever. Non-profit clients include the IMF, the European Central Bank, the World Bank, the UN Development Programme, the Council of Europe, and the Dutch peacekeeping forces.

[www.itim.org](http://www.itim.org)



### **Emer Beamer**

Social Designer and Educator. Founder at Unexpect, co-founder at Butterfly Works and NairoBits

Emer Beamer from Ireland is based in Amsterdam. Her new studio and virtual school, Unexpect, teaches children the art of social design and invention. She is also one of the designers of the upcoming 'Nederlandse School', whose mission is to train a new generation of creative and independent teachers, which will have a big impact on the quality of secondary school education in the Netherlands.

In 2004, Emer co-founded Butterfly Works, co-creation studio for a better world, which works in 16 countries globally and enjoys structural funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its work. In 2000, Emer co-founded Nairobits, a design school in Kenya for young people from informal settlements, which has since been successfully adapted to Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia. Emer recently completed the post-graduate program at THNK, the Amsterdam School of Creative Leadership and is a regular speaker on innovative education and social design and invention. She is currently doing research for a book about all the things she didn't learn at school.

'My latest venture is driven by the vision that if everyone could tap into their inner creativity and natural empathy, then together we could solve almost all the problems that the world has.'

[www.unexpect.nl](http://www.unexpect.nl)



### **Kwela Sabine Hermanns**

Core Faculty & Curator at THNK

Kwela is a highly focussed, process-oriented entrepreneur and innovation specialist with many years of business experience in education, research, training and project management in the creative industries.

She is bi-lingual in English and German, owns a Masters degree in New Media Studies and trained in small business innovation at Copenhagen Business School.

She coaches and trains people and organisations in goal implementation and dynamic change management techniques.

"My own goal is to support inter-disciplinary innovation towards value based and surprising sustainable futures. I combine a highly analytical and strategic mind with a passion for team work, people and relationship building."

[www.thnk.org](http://www.thnk.org)