

IOAPA Session & General Assembly 2013

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Why it is the coolest thing to be a Hans Van Haute scholarship winner!



Greetings to all of you from us– Isidora and Nenad – the two Hans Van Haute scholarship winners from Serbia and Croatia. This article will describe our experience in the IOAPA session! Why read it?

- 1) it might well motivate you to participate in the next IOAPA session solely in a positive way, and
- 2) you will get first-hand experience of the IOAPA session through the eyes of the youngest male and female participants (and you might even recognise yourself in some of the situations described).

So, let us guide you through our experience:

The very first meeting with IOAPA participants

That was an interesting experience. The IOAPA session started with the opening dinner in Athens! Much to our surprise the average age of the participants was kind of higher than expected, but this was indeed cool! They know how to have fun. After all, they are quite experienced in that! We learnt a lot of from them and had a great time with them.

The meeting with IOA young participants in Athens

We had the opportunity to meet participants of the YP session on their very last night in Athens. Although it was their farewell evening, they were very keen to meet us as former IOA young participants and current IOAPA participants. I am sure, you all know how cool it is to meet new people from all around the world who share the same life philosophy as you.

Lectures and work activities

Modus operandi – our work activities were carried out in thought-provoking lectures in which each of us was included. Alright, let's slow down a bit. Particularly ourselves, we were thinking –what could I contribute, as next to me there are accomplished professionals and academics? However, much to our surprise, all participants were interested in our opinions and we were actually asked to provide our input. It was cool that they treated us as equals, attaching importance to our fresh ideas and mind-set.

Wake up music & early morning activities



Every morning from 7 to 8 am there was wake up music and morning exercise with Uli. He was teaching every morning the Daoyin Yangsheng Gong, a Chinese-style technique created in the 1970's, a style which combines medical and philosophical traditions of old writings with findings of modern medicine. It was a great experience and exercise of how to put your body and mind in balance.



Every afternoon, we had sports activities. First, fistball organized by the great Austrian team, then volleyball by Gabriel and aerobics by Costas.

Social evenings

Several times, we had social evenings. Richard and Vita were in charge of the programme and the participants of IOAPA session had the opportunity to present not only their culture, but also their skills, and in general all participants were encouraged to present anything he/she found interesting, without any limits. Also, older generations were reminded and younger ones were introduced to how the IOAPA session looked like in 1989 by an interesting video. We felt the spirit of various countries as Belarus, Canada and Ukraine. It was so atypical social evenings where we had the chance to play very interesting games, being even happier, fostering and building new friendships, being like one big family. Those social evenings were really some kind of team buildings for us. We also learned how to dance American dance that were performed by participants attending workshops held every afternoon by Betz and Laurel.

Nights out



If you think that in the absence of very young people, there was no nightlife and fun, you are wrong! The atmosphere was almost the same as the YP session, but it lasts just for one week. An amazing pool party was organised where we got to taste the traditional IOAPA sangria recipe which has been passed down over the years from generation to generation and we got to dance and enjoy a beautiful Olympian night by the pool. Many nights were spent in Zorbas where we danced until the

morning. We also went to a vineyard near the village, where we had the chance to taste some traditional Greek food, dance some traditional Greek dances and experience the real Greece!!



Trip to the beach

Friday was our free day, so those who wanted had the opportunity to go to the beach. We went to Zacharo beach, spending a relaxing afternoon at a beautiful beach. We felt like we were on holiday, somewhere far from reality! Beautiful, calm and clean, without many tourists, the beach offered us real relaxation and a good small team-building.

Farewell

But just like everything nice, the IOAPA session had to come to an end. On the last day we had elections and a new Board was elected for a 2-year term. The last night was spent in Zorbas where we danced until the early morning and those who stayed in Athens until 2nd July had dinner all together and then some farewell cocktails in Athens.

Both of us came to IOAPA session without any particular expectations. We didn't know how it looks like, how IOAPA actually works, we didn't know all those people, we didn't know each other and then, once the session was over, came back home with a suitcase full of memories. We met old friends and made new ones, we gained a lot of knowledge, we heard a lot of amazing life stories and professional experience of older IOA participants which meant a lot to us.

All in all, we re-lived our Olympic dream which we first lived as young participants and now we are impatient for the IOAPA session in 2015. We hope we will see more people, especially younger people. As we, young people, constitute the future of this world, it is our moral duty to keep that Olympic flame alive and be ambassadors of Olympic values in our own countries. Finally, as winners of the Hans van Haute scholarship for IOAPA session 2013, we want to encourage people to apply for this great scholarship as well. So don't hesitate and don't miss the next opportunity and, until then, all we have to say is –see you at IOAPA 2015!

A few Words about the Hans van Haute Scholarship

During the 1985 Young Participants Session, Hans van Haute from Belgium was inspired and encouraged by the President of the Academy, Professor Nissiotis, to organize an alumni association of the IOA. On his own initiative, Hans wrote, and mailed a newsletter to all the 1985 participants to keep the spirit alive. Upon the urging of Yiannis Zoumpoulis (GRE), Professor Nissiotis also put the same thought into the heads of 1986 IOA participants Laurel Brassey Iversen (USA), Ingolfur Hannesson (ISL) and others during a meeting in his office. He promised the IOA facilities free of charge for an IOA alumni meeting. Shortly after the 1986 session Hannesson also began publishing a newsletter for the participants. Eventually van Haute and Hannesson were connected and coordinated their efforts. Almost immediately following the 1987 session, Paul Baldacchino (MLT), joined forces with Ingolfur and Hans and the three became the driving force behind a reunion in Olympia. In March 1988 Hannesson and Zoumpoulis met in Athens with IOC member, Mr. Nikos Filaretos, who was also the IOA President following the death of Professor Nissiotis. With Zoumpoulis leading the way in Athens, the final plans for a reunion in 1989 rapidly took shape. Invaluable support came when Mr. Filaretos sent a formal letter on 27 March 1989 informing all NOCs and NOAs around the world about the upcoming meeting and value of such an endeavor to the Olympic Movement. Recognizing Hans van Haute's dedication to the birth of IOAPA there was a strong movement at that first conference to make him the organization's first president. But Hans refused all these attempts. Not long after the conference everyone learned that Hans was suffering from cancer. On 13 June 1991, just weeks before the second alumni conference, crushing news came that Hans had lost his battle with cancer. In 1993 during the IOAPA Session, a tree was planted in memory of Hans behind the Old Lecture Hall. The first tree survived only a few years and a second tree was planted which thrives there today. IOAPA developed the Hans van Haute Scholarship to help participants in need attend the session. The report of each session is sent to Hans' wife, Lieve Bague-De Keersmaecker.