

The beginning

“So Bjorn, could I ask you a question?”

“Sure, Eve. What’s up?”

“Bjorn, you are always talking about chasing dreams and the importance of creating your own life. You let us make bucket lists and you are our biggest cheerleader when we accomplish something of that list.” “But what about your dreams?”

Well you could wonder what happened in my mind, because reality is that I was slowly growing up as a teacher without chasing my wildest dreams.

“Well, Eve. I’m always wondering what would happen if we just simply take our backpacks, our laptops along and travel around the world. Living as a Digital Nomads, while you’re working on your regular projects that you normally would do in this concrete building.”

“Bjorn, when are you going chase that dream?”

You could imagine I was sweating like hell and had a million thoughts about but’s and maybe’s. My principal would never agree with this idea and certainly not pay for it.

Needless to say that she would. In fact, when I came into my principal’s office and told her about this dialogue with Eve., she said what a smart little woman and you should just go. I will call our Executive Board and tell them about this amazing idea.

And so we went. A group of thirteen adventurous students, a co-worker and I left with our backpacks on the third of March 2020. From Poland to Bratislava, Vienna, Budapest, and Romania, with the final call Athens. Unfortunately, we never really made into Romania and Athens, due to Covid-19. We did have this amazing experience about learning in real life. Working on the spot and why would you talk about Freud if you could visit his home in Vienna?

Students with a major in environmental studies, animal sciences, nutrition and florist became a group in such a short notice. Co-working together on their own project with different approaches. By the time we arrived on a Saturday morning at 7:30, after a night of traveling in Bratislava, those students took their laptop and started working on their program, when I was only thinking about sleeping.

Needless to say that this experiment as a Digital Nomad school gave so many new insights about how to organize education in the 21st century. How to create meaningful curricula and the harsh way of swimming against the tide of a school system that has aged.

The present

After 2,5 years of waiting and creating a new momentum for the Digital Nomads., we are ready to do it again. This time we are setting higher expectations for creating new ways of learning, whilst taking the lessons learned from Covid-19 into account. In October 2022 we start selecting our new Digital Nomads students. We will set up a preparation program where they will make a travel plan together and set up personal goals. This way, we can take off in March 2023 and hopefully we visit your schools and universities along the way.

Where we can learn from each other in different border crossing contexts, because we believe that learning in the real world sets in better if you can get involved in local culture and meeting peers of your own. So that we can learn about our differences, our equalities and build a better tomorrow together. One where we're learning in European school communities and solving challenges that are bigger than our borders.

The future

For today I'm hoping that you all got inspired by this story and that you would love to join this journey of Digital Nomads. So by the time it's 2024 we could create not just a Dutch group of Digital Nomads, but a group of Europeans that are going to travel together and work side by side on different projects.

Besides the Digital Nomads, we are building a new kind of school right now. Yuverta is currently busy with setting up Yuverta College. A school without a specific program or place, where students can choose from various programs and different studies at different places. Students at Yuverta college are following a three-year personal developed program based on their own needs and interests. By the end of the program they could end up with more than one major and several diploma's, which gives students a broader start in their careers.

The dream

And from that point of view I would like to end with our dream: a European school for vocational education. One where students could become fulltime Digital Nomads. Where they can choose their subjects and locations throughout Europe. To learn in co-creation with other Europeans, so that we are not only talking about a better future but creating one with the leaders of tomorrow.