

Report

Teacher Education Network (TEN)

Nordplus Intensive course: Innovative and sustainable aesthetic methods for citizenship education in Nordic and Baltic perspectives (ISAMCE)

ISAMCE 3: Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods – Solidarity

Location: The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Education (HSD), Stockholm University, Sweden

Date: 8 -12 April 2019

Overall objectives

Teacher Education Network (TEN) is a network with special focus on the aesthetic subjects in the teacher education. In the project ISAMCE the overall objective is to develop skills and competencies related to citizenship: the capacity for communication and dialogue, the capacity to live with others, to recognize and accept differences, sharing narratives in an aesthetical collaborative learning approach. The particular innovative approach of the project explores the current topic of citizenship through aesthetic processes and expressions in innovative transdisciplinary and multimodal ways. In ISAMCE 3 lecturers of citizenship participated and collaborated with teachers in arts/crafts, dance, drama and music. The project included teacher students from the different teacher educations in all the Nordic and Baltic countries.



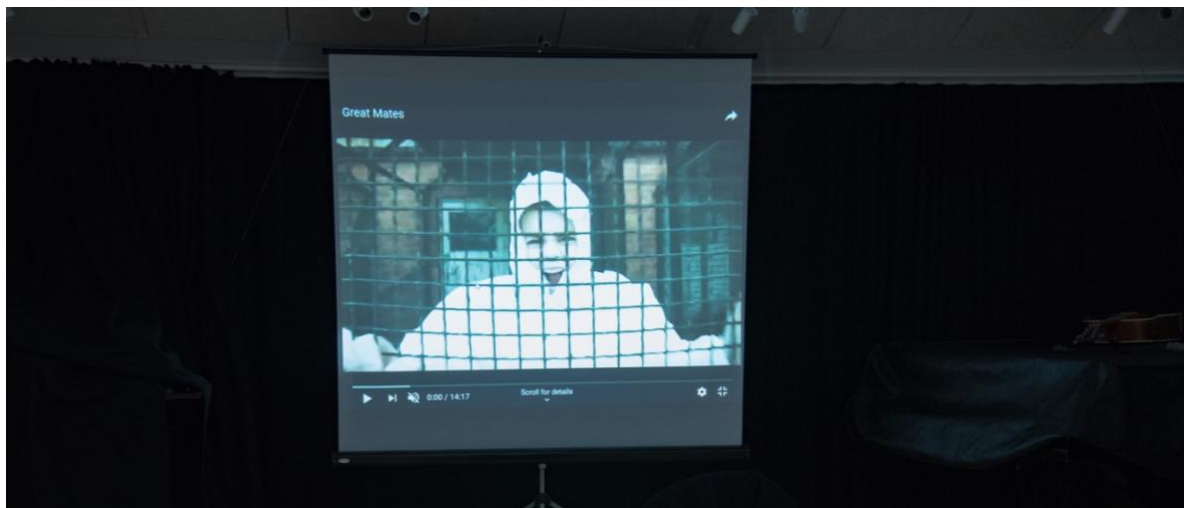
ISAMCE 3 was 2019 located at Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Education, HSD at Stockholm University. The Institution conducts teaching and research in the area of teaching and learning in Arts, Social Sciences and in Humanities. At HSD, teaching is conducted at the first, second and third cycle levels in the area of teaching and learning primarily within History, Religion, Social Studies, Civics, Geography, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama and Music. The research at HSD concerns these subjects and is focused on all levels of the education system.

Aesthetic education is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses a broad variety of methods of learning together and their corresponding systems of pedagogy and didactics; diverse approaches to art and media; as well as topics relating to the concept of expanded visual culture. Aesthetic education expands the repertoire of interpreting, using and creating images. Therefore, it is a crucial element in all learning, and should be essential to all school subjects. By communicating visually and in an explorative way, new ideas develop on how reality is shaped and how it can be organized and appropriated, practices and learning processes thus becoming visible. The Study of Aesthetic Education investigates the significance of new media and digital imagery for classroom education and school subjects. Aesthetic education facilitates freedom of speech, multi- and interdisciplinary work, digital and art-based learning, as well as inclusive education.

Overall learning objectives of the three years project ISAMCE has been:

- New approaches in aesthetic education and citizenship education
- Knowledge about and experience with theme based and aesthetical collaborative learning approaches
- Experience the particular potential of aesthetic processes and expressions in dealing with the particular issue of citizenship education
- Sustainable outcomes: critical transferability of learned experience to local contexts
- 21st century skills as: Knowledge construction, relevant use of IT in learning environments, self-evaluation and competent communication.

We have been working with a theme-based approach to education, including a transdisciplinary and multimodal perspective. Transdisciplinary means crossing the borders of diverse disciplines to create a holistic approach to the field of study. Transdisciplinary can refer to concepts or methods that were originally developed by one discipline, but are now used by several others. In this context multimodal means that different modes of aesthetic expressions as for example words, images and music, dance and scenography are working together towards a more differentiated and holistic understanding of the topic Citizenship. The themes of the three different intense courses has been *Freedom* in Copenhagen 2017, *Equality* in Reykjavik in 2018 and *Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods - Solidarity* in Stockholm 2019.



This year we addressed and challenged aspects of gender in a multi-ethnic society in our keywords. If democracy is to fulfill its promise of providing equal opportunities to all members of the society, it must ensure that women have equal access to leadership positions. Centuries of indoctrination made people believe that only men are capable of dealing with knowledge and given political responsibilities. This meant that women were treated as property, limited only to their roles as wives and mothers and were not full-fledged citizens. The learning of gender justice is gaining acceptance as one of the main challenges to be tackled.

Fundamentally, citizenship is both ontological and existential, about the right to live and to play an active role in society. As the world becomes smaller through globalization, our contacts with other cultures become closer. This might have several consequences: appropriation and respect, understanding and social integration. The building of multi-ethnic societies and the management of ethnic conflicts represent a major challenge to the world today. Extreme forms of ethno-nationalism, xenophobia and ethnic violence have become obstacles to the democratic society. Through the aesthetic subjects, we made statements and explored the challenges related to citizenship and brought new perspectives to our way of thinking citizenship today. This included discussing and working with relevant/new artistic methods and strategies to rethink and expand the practice of citizenship in relation to identity, gender, racism, prejudices and images – intercultural competence.

The participants in the intense course in Stockholm 2019 were bachelor students in teacher education from 8 countries: Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. The criteria for selecting students was decided at each institution. There were several teachers participating and they came from all of the above countries. The local coordinators were Mimmi Larsson and Maria Pemsel, lecturers at Stockholm University. The new TEN-network coordinator Aslaug Furholt have been scaffolding and encouraging the local hosts with regular skype meetings, important information as budget and administration.



Activities and collaboration

ISAMCE 3 2019 in Stockholm started already 2018 with collaborative meetings with the new project committee to plan and prepare the intensive course. The committee was formed of representatives from different partner institutions, together with this year's hosts. The TEN-coordinator organized meetings in both Copenhagen and Stockholm. After the first meeting a preliminary program was decided and a document was shared with all partner institutions on Google-drive. The program had suggestion of student activities and teacher collaborations. The different activities were keynotes, warm-ups, workshops, summing ups and evaluations, student presentations, student lead activities, visiting exhibitions, city walks and teacher meetings in different forms.

During the intense week ISAMCE 3, the students and teachers worked in different transnational groups. The teacher meeting and dinner at Sunday evening was the starting point for the teacher collaborations where groups were formed to plan the different workshops. The teachers organized the course workshops in order to qualify the theme "Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods - Solidarity" and inspire the students to explore the theme in different subjects, from different aspects and with different materials.

To strengthen the group and include all participants in an equal way we decided to have organized meals as often as possible. Teachers and students were invited to one evening dinner in the city and several lunches were pre ordered during the week. Every day the Swedish "fika" was included in the program. We tried to make environmentally conscious choices and avoid disposable items so each participant had a personal cup with nametag to use the whole week. Less meat was served and there was a vegan options every meal.



ISAMCE 3 was located at HSD in the "Stables" that have designed specific classrooms for dance, drama, music and visual arts. The different rooms are gathered in one building close to each other with a

multimodal methodological concept and center called “the Studio” that facilitated this week’s collaborations and activities.

Lectures of citizenship introduced the theme, and the specific focus of this intensive course through a lecture showing the dynamics of different interpretations of the theme form the history of ideas, political history and religious traditions.

In every intense course of ISAMCE the student from each institution have had a pre-task. In the presentations this year the students expressed their own understanding of the notion of “Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods - Solidarity” and created innovative pieces.

Each aesthetic subject dance, drama, music and visual arts had a specific exploratory workshop where the student was divided into the intense weeks transnational project groups. In the workshops the teachers inspired the students to experiment with new ideas to broaden their horizons. The teachers were scaffolding the students by giving them different tools and materials to investigate possibilities and peculiarities in body, sound and space. The site-specific elements and semantic terms were also processed different digital tools.



Site specific teacher hosts and technical support during the intense week was Mimmi Larsson, Maria Pemsel and Staffan Guttman. They were responsible for the use of the rooms, the material, equipment, daily information, organization and meals and beverage. All the participating teachers were in some way responsible for the scaffolding of the five different transnational student groups through the working process - from early ideas to final performances.

The program contained city walks in the Old Town of Stockholm, visiting “Play a role” an exhibition about making a difference about those who intervene and those who don’t at “The Living History Forum”.

We planned and executed specific teacher meetings during ISAMCE 3. There were teacher meetings for presentation of research, sharing methods, subject specific talks, informal exchange transdisciplinary discussions over coffee and a formal TEN-network meeting with the representatives from the partner institutions.

The six Swedish students both had the role as participants and student hosts during the week. Initially they welcomed the visiting students at the hostel with an informal walkabout the City of Stockholm in the Sunday evening. On Monday evening they were responsible for guiding all students around Campus, playing games and grilling “Varmkorv med bröd” with “Påskmust”. To make this first evening cozy different national contributions came from all participating students. Several transnational groups were formed to plan the last evenings activities that included the “Houseband”.

The student groups created performances which they presented on the last day of the course. Feedback from the teachers was then given to each group with the following criteria:

- The theme of the course must be clear.
- All groups must work with sound, body, visuality and space
- Site specific elements / references must be included in the presentation
- Clear choice of genre: Performance, Installation, Video.



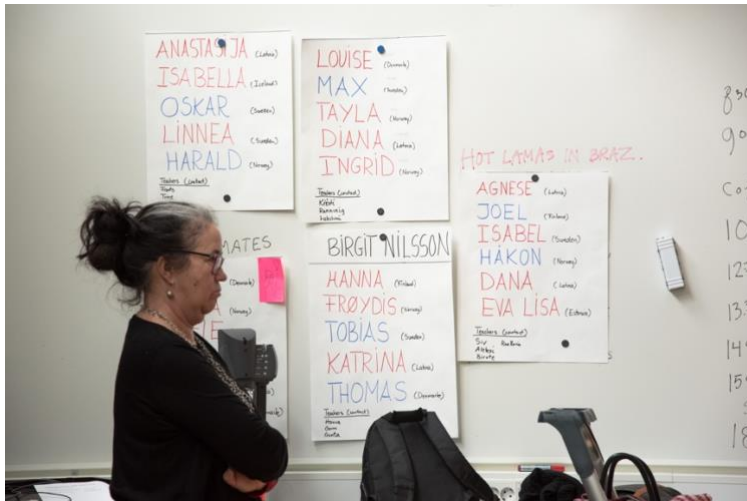
When the participants, students as well as teachers return home they all wrote an evaluating report and reflect over the outcome of the course and in the next part you can see some quotes that is representative for their reflections.

Results and outcomes

The summary of the students written reports with reflections, evaluation of the course and some personal quotes

Organization

The students were overall content with the organization and they expressed that working methods matched with the Idea of the course.



“The organization of the course was magnificent, it was intense, but since I knew, that it would be that, I was prepared. But I kind of enjoyed it, because we got so much great experiences and learned so much! I feel really privileged to be a part of it.”

“The organization was structured and clear and provided us with multiple resources to take advantage of, both in the form of the content of the workshops and exercises, but also the facilities and technical equipment and support”.

“... a good point was the fact that almost all events were held in one place, which made us feel like a part of this university and come every day with the feelings that this place has become for us more familiar and homely”.

“It was a positive thing, that we were able to use as many rooms and various aids as we were, since it gave us a feeling of not being limited with what we were able to do”.

“The house band was a brilliant idea, and we can still hear the music and feel the joys of Stockholm if we close our eyes”.

Working methods

The hands-on practice in the workshops gave the students a lot of creative ideas for the group productions. Many students express that there could have been one more day with workshops, and they enjoyed the warm-ups.

“Excellent! Inspirational, concrete and mentally multidimensional”

“A very pleasant and important point of this course was that the essence of these concepts was conveyed not through presentations or lectures, but through games, assignments, our personal activity and participation. This course helped to understand how many facets and concepts can include one word”.

“As a music teacher the most beneficial experiences were the workshops because they gave me a lot of new ideas on what to do with my pupils in class. I can combine the dance, art and drama lessons with music lessons”.

“For me, who is well at home when it comes to working with music and theater, was pleasantly surprised by the art workshop which opened my eyes on how you can work with your body to express different emotions”.

“This week showed all interesting methods to work with students no matter how old or educated in specific subject they are. We learned how amazing it is to be students when teacher is more like a friend than an authority”.

“The workshops were professionally held, and I felt the lucidity of every aesthetic subject. The teachers that held the workshops were serious, exploring, proficient, experienced and curious. I felt I got many role models for this important task, becoming an aesthetic teacher. I also felt the drive, clear focus and the urge of teaching aesthetic subject getting materialized during these workshops”.

“Most exciting surprises for us was the production that every group made. Everyone had such a different way of presenting their aesthetical presentations using such different approach to the theme. We liked that the assignment was loose but structured at the same time”.



Collaboration and internationalization

The students wrote that they had to step out of their comfort zones and argument their ideas. Discussions and doing exercises together brought all students and teachers closer as equals, breaking of all culture and language barriers. In the reports some student suggested even more name games, warm-ups and that the hosting students also should gain from staying in the hostel with the other students.

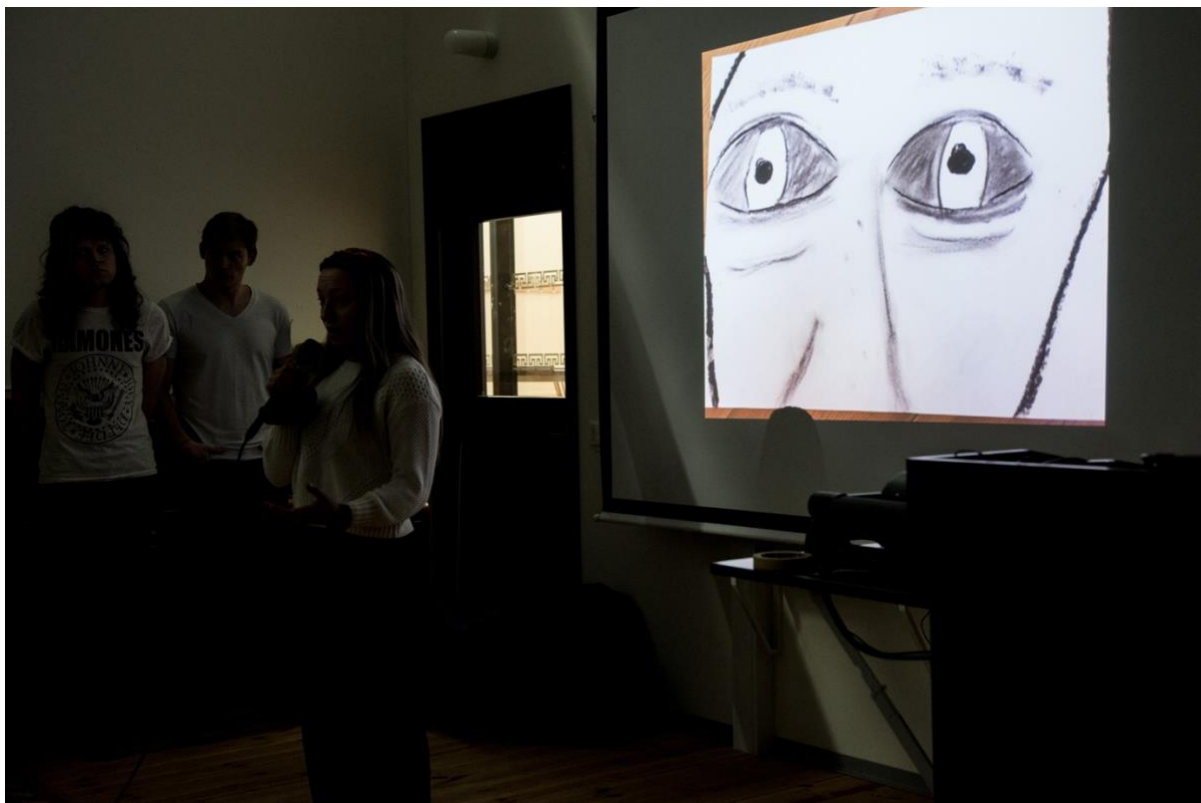
"... This experience provided an opportunity to test our strength in teamwork with strangers, as well as to express ourselves creatively in other areas of art".

"...we learned to adapt in different places, to communicate to students from different countries with such a different seeing trough life /.../ It was really nice to meet everybody and hear everyone's opinion and debate".

"The highlight of this course was of course to work with all the students from other countries and to get to know their characteristics and views of the world. The most beneficial that this course has given me was an eye-opening experience that you can work whit all kinds of themes through different aesthetic approach".

"This course itself was a great example of the topic. It was all about solidarity to meet in a big international group of students and teachers and cooperate together and create something new. It gave us a good example and experience of how a group can make such powerful effect and create something beautiful together".

"The topic of the week is a big topic. Solidarity and brotherhood can be discussed in many different ways. However, we think that the methods that were showed to us in workshops, are effective ways to deal with the topic. Sometimes you can not read or write in order to express yourself. When performing, you may have a lot more effect on other people than in a written language".



Professional outcomes educators to be

Some student wrote that this course will greatly affect their development as teachers. They learned new methods of work that will allow their pupils to achieve the desired result quickly and efficiently.

“For me as a future teacher, this experience made clear for me that freedom of expression for all of us is very important, especially for a creative children and teenagers”.

“The methods used in this course was something I could relate to in my own education at Stockholm university as a school age educare teacher. I also believe that these kind of methods of working with aesthetical matters can affect the relationship in a group and create a better and closer environment for the people who are participating in it”.

“... during this course I realized that I as a future teacher should be universal in my abilities, as well as be able to combine several types of art in my field of activity. I also understood that it is very important for me as a teacher to be on one wave with students, to be able to listen to him and accept his point of view, that is, to be in solidarity”.

“I got many ideas for my teaching, and the most important was that skill and craftsmanship is one part, but the experience of visualizing is a competence the aesthetics teacher can teach by scaffolding to the pupils. The lecture about fraternity along with the lecture on radical aesthetics gave me the democratic perspective, that the act of visualizing also builds democratic citizens. This combination gave me a really strong mission in my future work”.



“The course is a good way to get refill of creative thinking and new ideas from other students and teachers. /.../ As an educator you do not work alone. You will work with others for the sake of the pupils and planning /.../ The concept of teamwork at ISAMCE, in different circumstances then we’re used to (as music students) gave experiences that will be useful as an educator. Starting from basically nothing, and then make something together is quite the task. The course gave us an insight about yourself and others, that you can learn from and definitely use in our future work as educators”.

The summary of the teachers written reports with reflections, evaluation of the course and some personal quotes:

“The course was well-organized and informative, the agenda clearly defined. I was impressed with course content, facilitation, comfortable atmosphere and an interactive environment. The course was excellent covering different points of arts education and solidarity issues, applying interactive teaching methods.”

Working with the theme

“The project working method are very suitable for this kind of course. The students are working autonomous in small groups, based on presentations and well-described tasks with great possibilities of their own influence. The democratic working methods are motivating, meaningful and gives possibility of using the potentials of each student. The situated learning processes and the developing of knowledge are meaningful and powerful. “

“I think we have created an innovative approach to the values of citizenship through the combination of philosophical and esthetic working processes with a high level of student participation and a lot of enthusiasm”.

” Brotherhood and sisterhood issues are always actual, because of the humankind tendency to divide into small conflicting groups. That's why I think, this course is very important.”

“I admire the idea about democracy on that course – students took the responsibility and act unbelievably efficient, got the results and were able to analyze afterwards their doings”.

“It was really interesting to watch and compare presentations from different countries, some presentations included music and even dance, others were more informative, like a short lecture”.

” Ambiance was pleasant and creative. Final presentations of every group of students were really original. Every group interpreted skills and knowledge that they have learned during the course in their own way”.

“Surprise about the results of students’ critical approach to the topic. Conclusion: the brotherhood can be seen as positive or negative phenomenon. /.../ Experience how the insight came through doubts and confusion – formulating the possible reasons of different views on brotherhood.”

“We got confidence that aesthetic methods can help to solve deep and contradictory societal - and together with it - educational problems.”

“Students’ performances revealed, that young generation is scared; and the art (aesthetical methods) appears as a mean for setting questions: what to do with confrontation the political correctness and actual feelings of people.”

Teacher collaboration and exchange

” That was great possibility to know about contemporary teaching methods in different countries.”

“The course was very well organized and I really appreciated that we had some time for exchange and discussion in the group of teachers.”

“In the program there was room for exchanging educational issues among the teachers from the various countries and subjects. This led to establishing informal network groups, that we can use and be inspired by in our daily work.”

“I think it is important to have more than one teacher from each subject all together. We managed that this year, which was good.”

Some other highlights of the course:

- Teachers discussions about research
- Experienced trustful relationship between teachers and students
- To see the growth of the students – their opening, inclusion, daring.
- Out-door grilling
- I enjoyed the final circle-singing on the campus ground
- The opportunity to participate at the *ISAMCE3-houseband* rehearsals and closing party concert. For me that was great new experience.



Professional teacher educator outcomes:

“As an educator I learned a lot, /.../ gained an understanding of new teaching techniques and will continue to examine different practices, which I’m planning implement into my teaching courses and project activities.”

“...In terms of giving not only more but all responsibility to students. I learned a lot from my colleagues – especially for art and media teachers”.

“It develops your own way of teaching, when you are watching and participating other lecturer’s way of working and communicating subjects through the arts.”

“The commitment in the group of students. They were dedicated to the program and their task. This is inspiring and gives me energy when I teach a compulsory subject as drama to students who may resist my subject – at least in the beginning - for various reasons. The ISAMCE-experience gives me energy to work with the resistance, and a belief that most of my students will overcome and enjoy, and see that the arts are important in the kindergartens where they are going to teach.”

Impact and dissemination

In the students’ rapports they describe that they are going to tell their closest friends about the experience of the intense course. Some of them will inform other student in relevant courses in the teacher programs at home. Many of them are sharing experiences about ISAMCE 3, its methods and what they have learned on social media, for instance Facebook, Instagram, university blogs and institutional homepages.

“I will tell every aesthetic teacher I know about the power of the course and about the focus and relevance of the course. When I meet someone negative to aesthetic subjects, I will tell them about the learning I received from this course”.

“Since I am currently doing my operational training at a school in Stockholm and have to do activities with the students who are attending the leisure time center there, I have planned to do some of the warming-up activities we did at ISAMCE2019 to reinforce their feeling of belonging to the group. This will also mean that the other students in my class at Stockholm University will learn about the activities as well during our summing up seminar in the end of the operational training course. The teachers who work at the school I am doing my operational training will also see the things I do and they might “steal” the ideas as well and continue to spread the. I have already talked to my mentor at the school about what we did at ISAMCE and what these activities could bring to the group in question in relation to creating a closer connection within the student group.”

The teachers will share new knowledge and understanding of holistic work in schools, and how to work with innovative and sustainable aesthetic methods in teacher education. For instance, the methods will be shared with colleagues in their own institutions and also in written papers and presentations made on national and international conferences.

“Summing up, I can say, that I am very glad, that I participated in ISAMCE 3 course. For me and students that was great new experience and opportunity to get new knowledge and experience, that can be used in our daily pedagogical and creative work. We established new international contacts, that can be very useful in the future and we hope to see all ISAMCE 3 participants again!”

The intense week were completed as planed executed to 100%, and as local coordinators and hosts we are content and even happy about the results.

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Mimmi Larsson and Maria Pemsel



Photos: Staffan Guttman, Mimmi Larsson, Maria Pemsel (HSD) and students pictures on the Facebook group *Isamce 2019 Stockholm*.