

# **Eager To Exchange?**

**Teachers and their motivation for international exchanges in Dutch secondary education**



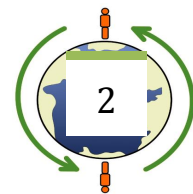
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Research Article, 26-08-2011

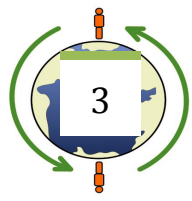


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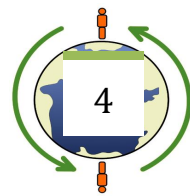
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## **Abstract**

International exchanges between schools are an essential part of the growing internationalisation of secondary education in the Netherlands. Despite political and scientific encouragements, the number of international exchanges within secondary education remains relatively low. How can this discrepancy between educational ideals and reality be explained? Prior research indicates that teachers are the main actors in the organization and execution of international exchanges. This study sets out to investigate the motivation of teachers who do partake in this specific form of education. Six interviews provide a starting point from which the tasks, goals and concerns of teachers involved in international exchanges are analysed. The conclusions that derive from this analysis lead to suggestions for further research and practical recommendations on international exchanges. Examining the role of the teacher could in turn generate new insight in how the number of international exchanges within Dutch secondary education can be stimulated.



# **1. Inciting Internationalisation: the motivation of teachers for International exchanges.**

## **1.1 Introduction.**

In April 2010 the ministry of Education, Culture and Science announced extra financial support to stimulate international mobility within secondary education. “Gaining knowledge does not stop at the national borders. This investment gives students the possibility to orientate beyond the borders of our country. That is what modern day youngsters need for the future”, according to the government statement (Ministerie van OC&W, 2010a).

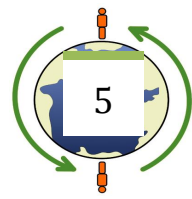
This initiative illustrates that internationalisation has become a source of innovation for secondary education in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Within this development, international exchange activities are perceived as effective ways of providing students with international skills, experience and understanding. Scientific research shows the positive effects of international exchanges on participating students and teachers (Deckers & Mateusen, 1994; Blankert, 2001; Oonk, 2004, 2007; Maslowski, 2009). Consequently, international mobility and exchanges featured prominently in the educational policies of the Dutch government in recent years (Onderwijsraad, 2005a, 2006a; Ministerie van OC&W 2009, 2010a, 2010b).

Despite these facts, annual reports show that the number of international exchanges within secondary education has “stabilised”. In fact, no more than 10-12% of the secondary students is able to partake in an international exchange in their entire school career (Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2010, p.18-19). This article to investigate this friction between ideals and reality through examining the motivation of teachers involved in organizing international exchanges.

To understand the rationale behind this inquiry, the choice for teachers and their motivation as research topic needs to be justified, followed by a definition of the research questions and variables. The second chapter is dedicated to the methodology used during this research. Thirdly, the results of this investigation are discussed. In the final chapter the conclusions of this research are presented, accompanied by practical recommendations and suggestions for further investigation. These outcomes could prove useful for every school teacher and manager interested in setting up an international exchange. In turn, this article could help stimulate the number of international exchanges within Dutch secondary education.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance the growth of bilingual secondary education in the Netherlands, better known as ‘TTO’ (Dronkers 1993; R.Maljers & A. Maljers 2005; Weenink 2009), the introduction of the subject area ‘European and International Orientation’, or ‘EIO’ (Oonk, 2004, 2007) and the appearance of the educational network ‘Europe as Learning Environment at Schools’, referred to as ‘ELOS’ (Stamm, 2005; Maslowski 2009)



## **1.2 Internationalisation and international exchange activities in secondary education.**

International exchanges are part of the wider process of internationalisation in secondary education. In her practical manual, Beernaert (2003, p.5) defines this concept as 'the introduction of the European and international dimension in school education'.

Over the last decade, internationalisation has become a prominent theme in the Dutch discourse on secondary education. The Internationalisation agenda for education 2006-2011 clearly identifies 'international partnerships ' and 'to enhance international mobility' to be important goals for the years to come (Onderwijsraad, 2006a, p. 2-3). More recently, the European Platform argued that internationalisation changed into a necessity for Dutch education in order for it to remain a competitive 'knowledge economy' (Europees Platform & VO-Raad, 2008, p. 2). In December 2009, the Dutch stated 'Mobility of all learners is an important, if not the most important impulse of internationalisation in education' (Ministerie van OC&W, 2009a, p. 7). Clearly, there are ambitions to further stimulate the international mobility within Dutch secondary education. The 'Internationalisation monitor for Dutch education', an annual assessment by several educational organisations, for both 2008 and 2009 shows a different reality. (See: Table 1)

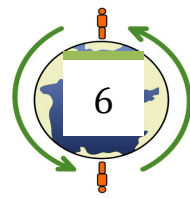
At first glance, these figures show that internationalisation has firmly established itself in Dutch secondary education.<sup>2</sup> However, the actual international mobility of teachers and students shows a less optimistic picture. In 2009 around 794 secondary school teachers went abroad for professional reasons, excursions and daytrips excluded. This indicates a mere growth of 0,2 % compared to the year 2006. Furthermore, during 2009 only 2,4% of all the Dutch secondary schools offered a multiple-day exchange in a foreign country to their students. Consequently, 22.929 students went abroad on exchange that year. This effectively means that no more than 10-12% of all students participate in an international exchange during their entire secondary school career, roughly the same amount as was measured over the last 3 years (Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2010, p. 18).

Whilst having necessary reservations, the conclusion can be drawn that the growth of learning activities that have international mobility as a prerequisite is stagnating.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the incentives for international exchanges stand in sharp contrast to the number of physical exchanges that actually take place, especially since the 'Internationalisation Monitor 2009' expects this number to have increased with only 0,1% in 2010 (Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2010, p. 19).

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<sup>2</sup> These internationalisation monitors included all the primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands for the school year 2008- 2009. The latter category consisted of 532 secondary schools with a total population of 934,943 students (Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2010, p.18 & CBS, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> First of all, the official assessments of the school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 have not been published yet. Secondly, traditional school excursions and daytrips abroad are not included in these calculations. Furthermore, the monitor only deals with schools that engage in international exchanges with financial assistance from the European Platform.



**Table 1. Internationalisation within primary & secondary education in the Netherlands, 2005-2010**

(based on: Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2009, p. 16 & Europees Platform, CINOP & NUFFIC, 2010, p.19)

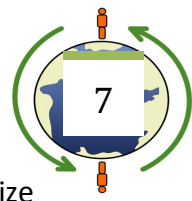
Internationalisation activities in Primary and Secondary Education	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	(estimated) 2010
Primary schools with an international activity, supported by the European platform.	5, 8 %	7, 3%	6, 4%	7,7 %	8,0 %
Secondary schools that organize educational projects with a foreign partner school.	57,9 %	58. 4%	59. 5%	60, 5%	60,0 %
Secondary schools with a multiple-day exchange project with a foreign institution	2, 3%	2, 4%	2,4%	2,4	2,5%
Secondary teachers that go on a multiple-day study visit abroad, student tutoring excluded.	1,6%	1,8%	1,8%	1,8%	1,8%
Secondary schools that offer bilingual education.	16,4%	18,1%	19,0%	22,5%	20%

### 1.3 International exchanges and motivation among teachers.

This research hopes to clarify the number of international exchanges within secondary education through investigating the motivation of teachers engaged in these exchanges . But on what grounds can be assumed that the motivation of teachers is of overriding influence on whether or not an exchange takes place? This important question is partly answered by examining prior research in this field.

International exchanges primarily need to be initiated, organized and executed at school level. Deckers and Mateusen (1994, p. 11) identified three main interest groups with regard to organizing international exchanges in school: the students, the school management and the teachers. The majority of earlier studies focus on the relation between exchanges and learning results of participating students. The positive effects of exchanges on language acquisition, social-emotional development, and increased intercultural knowledge among students are confirmed in several studies (Coleman, 1997; Blankert, 2001; Oonk, 2004; Twynstra-Gudde, 2005; Maslowski 2009).

The positive influence on the learning of students is an important reason to further stimulate international exchanges. But which role do school managers and teachers play in these exchanges? After comparing ten `best practice examples` of international exchange activities, Blankert (2001, p. 14) claimed that the support of the school management is an absolute precondition for internationalisation to take place. It was often the teachers, however, that determined the success and the recurrence of these exchanges. The importance of the teaching staff in the execution of exchanges is further confirmed in other publications (Harskamp, Suhre & Zomerman, 2005; Onderwijsraad, 2006b; Oonk 2007).



If teachers are of such influence on exchanges, then what impels these educators to organize them on top of their other professional responsibilities? In 2004 Gerrit Oonk published an extensive research on internationalisation in secondary education. After 32 interviews with teachers actively engaged in international exchanges, Oonk (2004, p. 203) concluded 'Teachers consider these activities extremely motivating; it gives them satisfaction, they discover new issues which interest pupils, they build up a network with foreign colleagues and become inspired for the daily teaching practice.' Similar motives recur in a later survey by Maslowski (2009, p. 52) who stated that 'the success of internationalisation activities is very dependent on the motivation of the executive staff, in this case the teachers'.

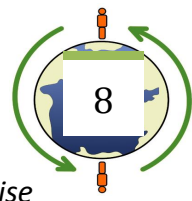
Prior research indicates that teachers are important actors in the organisation of exchanges. Furthermore, teachers perceive their involvement as motivating and satisfying in multiple ways. This information, however, fails to explain the relation between teachers and the stagnating number of international exchanges. Scholars have been less clear on what exactly motivated these teachers to start with their exchange in the first place. Equally overlooked are factors that might negate the motivation of involved teachers. Because previous study has not addressed these issues, this exploratory research aims to identify more factors that influence the motivation of teachers to organize an international exchange, or not.

#### **1.4 Research question, sub-questions and variables.**

Through study of 6 interviews, this qualitative research aims to clarify which positive and negative factors influence their motivation to organize exchanges. The central research question, '*Which factors influence the motivation of teachers to partake in international exchanges within Dutch secondary education?*' is focused on the concept of motivation. Educational psychologist Emmons, simply defines motivation as 'the incentive to act'. As such, motivation is determined by its three constituting variables; task, goals and concerns. Research on motivation should therefore examine the relation between these three constituting variables (Emmons, 1999, p. 19-21). It follows that each of these variables is further examined in a sub-question.

The first sub-question, '*Which tasks do teachers fulfil while organising an international exchange*', has a double function. First of all, it gives an impression of the practical role of teachers in organizing the exchange. Secondly, this sub-question evaluates the importance of teachers in the initiation and continuation of international exchanges within schools. This indicates the possible influence of teachers on the number of international exchanges in secondary education.

The second sub-question, '*Which goals have a positive effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange*', addresses the multiple reasons why teachers organize an international exchange. These reasons are indicated by the many different goals that the interviewees mention. The variable 'goals' should be understood as a desired situation that is pursued through organizing the international exchange.



The third sub-question, 'which concerns have a negative effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange', examines influences that reduce motivation. The 'concerns' mentioned by the interviewees indicate circumstances in which the motivation for international exchanges decreases. Identification of both the positive and negative influences on their motivation results in a better understanding of the obstacles and opportunities they experience while organizing an international exchange. This in turn might illuminate the role of teachers in the stagnating number of exchanges within Dutch secondary education

**Table 2. Research question, sub-questions and research variables.**

**Research Question:**

*Which factors influence the motivation of teachers to partake in international exchange activities within Dutch secondary education?*

**Sub-questions:**

- 1. Which tasks do teachers fulfil while organising an international exchange?*
- 2. Which goals have a positive effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?*
- 3. Which concerns have a negative effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?*

**Research Variables**

International exchange: *Any school activity with the explicit aim of transcending national borders through establishing a physical exchange with foreign educational institutions .*

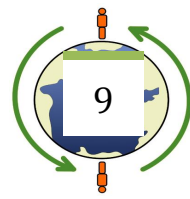
Motivation: *An incentive to act, which can be divided into three constituting elements; tasks, goals and concerns.*

Tasks: *Mandatory job-related duties, indicated by the respondents.*

Goals: *Desired situations that are actively pursued, having a positive effect on motivation.*

Concerns: *Undesired situations that have a moderating or negative effect on motivation.*





## **2. Methodology and Motivation: Instruments, Respondents & Analysis.**

### **2.1 Research Structure**

Because literature study does not give complete insight in what motivates teachers to organise an international exchange, this research has an exploratory nature. According to Segers (2002, p. 119) the aim of exploratory research is to “discover which characteristics of the research topic are important.” Hence, this research limits itself to identifying the specific tasks, goals and concerns that influence the motivation of teachers to organise an exchange.

To understand how this research tries to answer its guiding questions, some explanation of the instruments, respondents and method of analysis is necessary. In order to explore the motivation of teachers, six interviews were conducted with educators involved in international exchanges. Through qualitative analysis of the tasks, goals and concerns that were mentioned, a general overview of the factors that influence their motivation is created. This research followed several methodological phases which are further explained below.

### **2.2 Preparing the interview & the interview scheme**

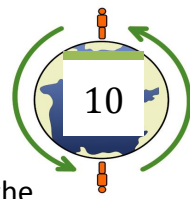
During the first phase, an interview scheme was devised that generated information on the tasks, goals and concerns of the questioned teachers. Because comparability is an important issue in social sciences, the interview scheme had to be reproducible. This means that formulation of each question ensures that the answers of different interviewees are comparable (Wester & Peters, 2004).

**Table 3. Interview Scheme (translated from the Dutch version included in the appendices) .**

#### **Interview Scheme `Eager to Educate`**

Interview Questions:

1. *Could you give a brief impression of your professional past?*
2. *Which responsibilities do you have at your current school?*
3. *Did you have experience with international exchanges in prior jobs?*
4. *What are your tasks within the international exchange in which you partake?*  
*(B. How does the international exchange work?)*
5. *What do you think is the main reason for this international exchange?*
6. *What would be a reason to end it?*  
*(B. Did that ever happen to an exchange activity?)*
7. *What do you like best in this exchange program?*
8. *How do the children benefit from this international exchange?*
9. *What is the importance of this international exchange at the school?*
10. *Concluding: What do you think is the most important thing about this international exchange?*



The first three questions of the interview scheme give background information of the respondent, which is useful for interpretation of the total interview. Question 4 deals directly with the tasks teachers fulfil in the organization of their exchanges. This question does not only reveal their practical responsibilities, but also the importance of teachers in the realisation of exchanges.

Questions 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 address the different goals that teachers set for their international exchanges. These positive factors signify the goals that motivate teachers to organize exchanges with institutions abroad. Question 6, and to a lesser extent 7, 8, 9 and 10, offer the possibility of concerns to be expressed. These issues affect motivation negatively and can cause an international exchange activity to stop, or not to start at all. In reality, the motivation of teachers to organize their exchanges is a balance of these positive and negative factors.

The interview scheme also includes checks, alternative ways of asking for the same information. These checks function to ensure that the respondents understood the question as it was intended and offer a chance to review earlier answers. For instance, the summarizing final question revisits the importance of the most negative and positive question, numbers 6 and 7.

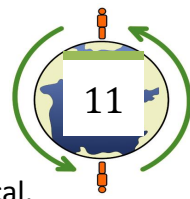
Before the first official interview, this scheme was tested on a practicing teacher at a bilingual school. This test showed that the questions were mostly formulated so that the respondent interpreted them as was intended. After some minor adjustments, the first real interview generated enough information to answer the research questions. This showed that the interview scheme was serviceable and not in need of further adjustment.

### **2.3 Selection and profile of schools and respondents.**

After contacting several schools, interviews were held with six teachers from two different secondary schools. School 1 caters to 1400 students and offers one stream of bilingual education. School 2 has a population of 2000 students and is one of the first schools to offer 3 streams of bilingual education. Both schools are located in the *Randstad* (i.e. the area of the four largest cities in the Netherlands, including the surrounding area).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the schools offer multiple internationalisation activities to their students, including physical international exchanges. According the threefold taxonomy of the Educational Council (Twynstra Gudde, 2005, p. 39), internationalisation has therefore `integrated` both schools.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that the interviewed staff members will have a positive inclination towards internationalisation.

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<sup>4</sup> According to Oonk, secondary schools positioned within the Randstad score lower in internationalisation activities compared to schools in the Dutch border provinces (Oonk, 2004, p. 182-183).



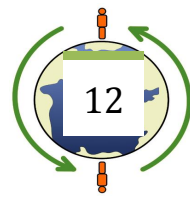
Six teachers were selected on the criteria of being currently involved in at least one physical, international exchange. The schools appointed the respondents, four teachers at school 1 and two teachers at school 2. This indicates that these teachers are known within school for their international commitment. Moreover, the selection criteria ensure that these specific respondents are already motivated enough to organise an exchange beyond borders. These facts entail that the respondents are likely to have a more positive attitude towards exchanges than the average teacher.

**Table 4. Respondents profile on years in education, professional responsibilities and gender, based on interview question 1-3**

Respondent	Years in education	Tasks	M/F	School
A	8	History teacher, including TTO Mentor 1 TTO, TTO teamleader	M	I
B	14	Geography teacher, including TTO Team leader HAVO 5 Comenius Project	M	I
C	20	P.E. teacher TTO, Section leader P.E. Mentor 5V, England exchange	M	I
D	3	English teacher, Project drama/English Coordinator international activities	F	I
E	12	International internships History teacher, including TTO Coordinator internationalisation	M	II
F	20	Arts Teacher including, TTO Mentor, U-teach trainer England excursions	F	II

Based on the first three interview questions, a small profile of the respondents was made. Instead of using the respondents' names, they were assigned a capital letter. Among the respondents were four men and two women. Four respondents have a Dutch nationality; the others originated from different European countries. With an average of 12,8 years, 4 out of 6 respondents have worked in education for over 10 years. Three subject teachers were included (Mr. B, Mr. C and Mrs. F), two teachers functioned as internationalisation coordinator (Mrs. D and Mr. E), and one teacher had coordinating responsibilities in a different field (Mr. A).

It goes without saying that including more respondents would have increased the representation of this research. However, with 3 subject teachers and 3 teachers with coordinating experience, the interviewees represent both teachers and school management. Considering the qualitative and exploratory nature of this inquiry, this group of respondents suited the scale of this research. This is further discussed in the concluding chapter.



## **2.4 Conducting & Transcribing interviews**

In order to ensure the comparability all the interviews were conducted in Dutch. Secondly, one observer was present at the interview in addition to the interviewer. Thirdly, the interview scheme was followed as closely as possible; except for follow-up questions and in case of unclear responses. These measures were taken to safeguard the reliability of the research.

The digital recording of each interview was used to exactly transcribe the given answers. Each researcher transcribed and analysed one interview conducted by a peer and one by his or herself. This form of peer-review decreased the chance that different interpretations of the same information compromised the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006). Peer review also helped identify similar answers given by different respondents to the same question. These similarities indicate 'codes', shared opinions on a certain issue among the different teachers.

## **2.5 Analysing answers: open, axial, and selective coding**

These codes are the essential in answering the research questions. To find these codes, the interviews were analysed using the three folded method: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Boeije 2005, p.85). The first step, 'open coding', implied that all the answers to the same interview were grouped using a colour coding system. This colour coding identified the three research variables 'tasks' (blue), 'goals' (green) and 'concerns' (red).

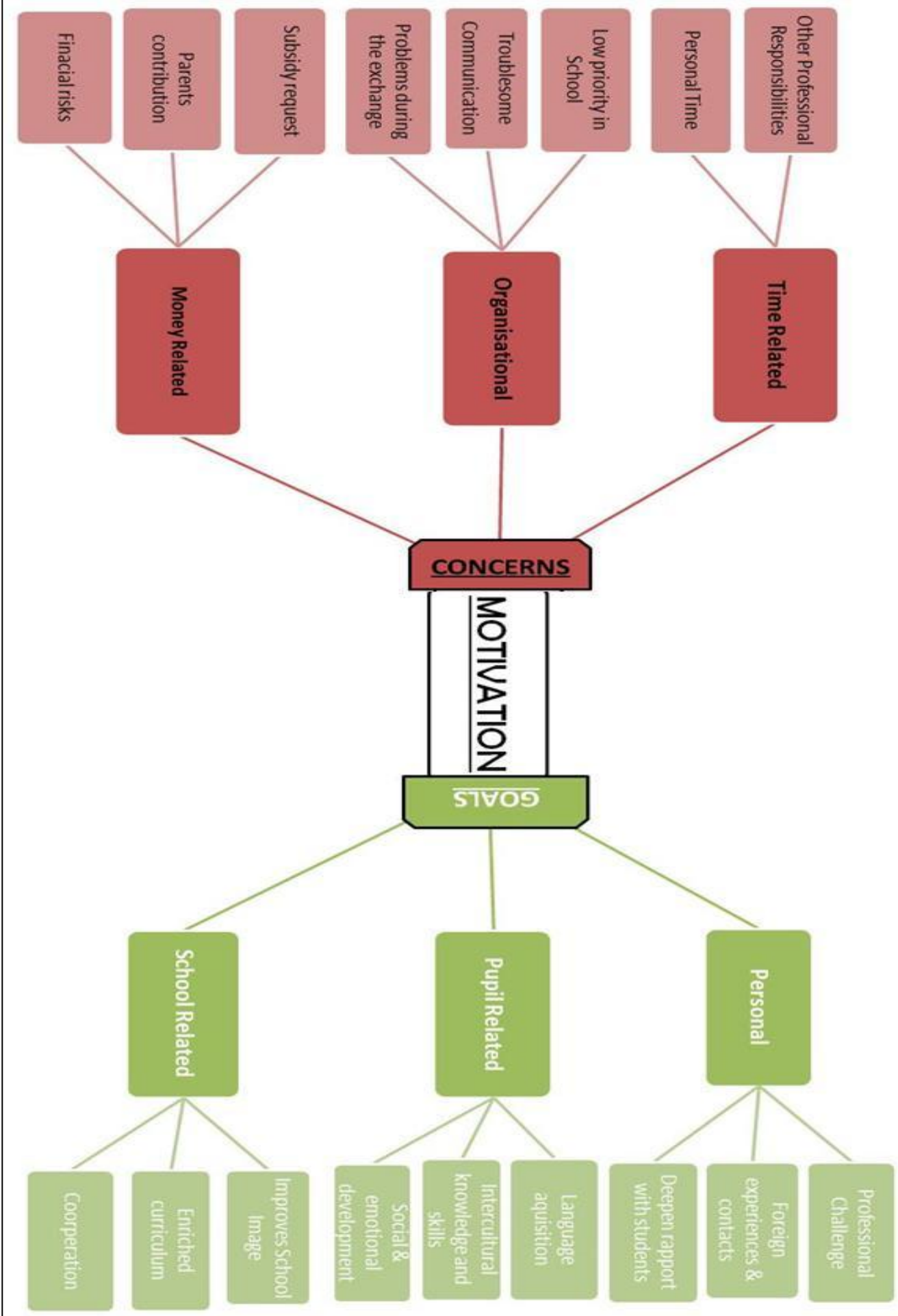
Within each colour, representing a variable, a further division was made between answers that addressed the same specific issue. These issues formed the axial codes, the basic codes that indicate shared opinions on goals and concerns that influence the motivation of teachers. In the final phase of analysis, 'selective coding', the importance of each axial code was measured by the number of interviews in which it was mentioned. Only axial codes referring to goals or concerns mentioned in three or more interviews were incorporated in the results. This threshold ensured that the results and conclusion were based on general issues that influence motivation, mentioned by at least 50 % of the respondents.

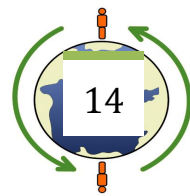
The selected axial codes were further used to visualise the relationship between the different issues that influence the motivation of the teacher. This information is given through categorisation of the results in a 'Motivation Map', shown on the next page.<sup>6</sup> This diagram visualises all the results of this research and which will be explained in the next chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> This 'Motivation Map' is made up out of the axial codes that represent goals and concerns mentioned by at least 50% of the respondents. These goals and concerns are further divided in analytical categories, showing the similarity between axial codes.

Table 5. MOTIVATION MAP, based on goals and concerns of six teacher regarding the organization of an international exchange





### **3. Motivated beyond borders: a teacher`s perspective**

#### **3.1 Representing results**

This third chapter contains the results of this research. The interviews, analysed according to the mentioned methodology, reveal the tasks, goals and concerns of teachers that organize an international exchange. The similar answers of the respondents, the axial codes, are grouped and addressed in each sub-question.

#### **3.2 Which tasks do teachers fulfil while organising an international exchange?**

The first sub-question deals with tasks that teachers have in the organisation of their exchange. The answers are structured in tasks before, during, and after the exchange.

All six teachers perceive the preparation of the exchange as their primary task. This is especially valid for Mr. B and Mr. C, both initiators of their exchange projects.<sup>7</sup> “I arrange the logistics, transportation, the insurances; you name it, the program, literally everything,” replied respondent C.<sup>8</sup> Even if the initiative for exchange lies elsewhere, involved teachers put most effort in the preparation of the exchange and its participants. Their practical responsibilities range from communication with foreign colleagues and parents to creating educational content which prepares students for the do’s and don’ts of the host-culture.<sup>9</sup>

During the exchange the tasks of the teacher are less visible. Although they feel responsible for the activity as a whole, the focus is on the wellbeing and learning experience of the participants. As Mr. A and others indicate, “Are my students safe? Funny enough, I don’t worry too much about myself when I am abroad.”<sup>10</sup> This reveals that teachers are often required to be present during the exchange, which applies to 4 out of 6 respondents.

The tasks that teacher fulfil after the exchange differ. Notifying different media, both in and out school, is commonly mentioned.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, some kind of proof is usually required in which the students show the knowledge gained abroad. Teachers take on a leading role in these learning activities, but these are irrelevant for the number of exchanges taking place. Two teachers stand out by trying to integrate the international exchange into their curriculum. As Mr. B mentioned, “The program of the exchange perfectly fits in the geography curriculum. But this makes it so much more relevant and fun for the students and for me as well.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Both teachers did so through international teacher conferences where interested educators are brought in touch with each other Interview Mr. B: #00:04:13-6# and Mr. C: #00:02:17-6#

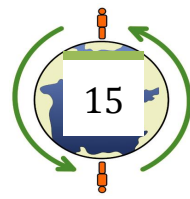
<sup>8</sup> Interview Mr. C: #00:02:59-5#, Mr E: #00:03:39-0# and Mrs. F: #00:03:26-7#

<sup>9</sup> Interview Mr B: : #00:12:19-6#, Mrs. F: #00:03:26-2#, Mr.E: #00:07:18-3#, and Mr. A: #00:02:50-5#

<sup>10</sup> Interview Mr. A: : #00:11:51-6#

<sup>11</sup> Interview Mr. C: : #00:16:43-7#, Mr.: #00:12:56-9#, Mrs. F: #00:09:18-6#

<sup>12</sup> Interview Mr. B : #00:18:10-, Interview Mrs. D: #00:11:46-9#



### 3.3 Which factors (goals) have a positive effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?

The second sub-question addresses the motives for teachers to organise an international exchange. These are indicated by the different goals, desired or achieved situations that the interviewees mention regarding their own exchange. The goals of teachers are categorized in goals related to participants, personal goals and goals connected to the school. A schematic overview is given in table 6.

The majority of the mentioned goals are focused on the participants of the exchange. All of the teachers see increased language proficiency as outcome of their international exchange.<sup>13</sup> As Mrs. D explains, “Language is so much more than grammar exercises in the book, and this stimulates them to spontaneously one or two foreign languages.”<sup>14</sup>

Language acquisition is mentioned five times in conjunction with intercultural contact. According to the respondents, this cultural enrichment manifests itself through more knowledge of the host culture, foreign friendships and the shown hospitality during return visits.<sup>15</sup> In the words of Mrs. F., “By being confronted with other cultures, they will also be amazed by different things when they get home. There is absolutely a strong intercultural element.”<sup>16</sup>

Half the respondents mention the social-emotional development of the participants. Mr. E, responsible for an exchange that is set up as an international internship, stated “The primary reason is to let the students prove to themselves how capable and independent they already are at the moment of exchange.”<sup>17</sup> This coming of age is also recognized by teachers involved in more conventional exchanges. The experiences abroad positively influence the self-esteem and independence of the participating students, according to teachers.<sup>18</sup>

The second-most important category is the personal goals. Four respondents explicitly describe their exchange as a professional goal.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the professional challenge, three teachers experience the new working environment and contact with foreign colleagues as especially rewarding.<sup>20</sup> Thirdly, the exchange leads to a more positive rapport with the students. “This creates a bond. Just like the few students who just left, they know me much better now because of our little trip a few weeks ago,” confirmed Mrs. F.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:07:11-6#, Mr. B #00:10:39-7# Mr. C: #00:10:55-4#, Mrs. D: #00:17:45-5# Mr.E: #00:09:39-9# and Mrs. F: #00:10:04-9#

<sup>14</sup> Interview Mrs. D : #00:03:08-7#

<sup>15</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:07:36-8#, Mr. B: #00:14:19-0# and Mr.C: #00:12:19-6#

<sup>16</sup> Interview Mrs.F: #00:04:14-2#

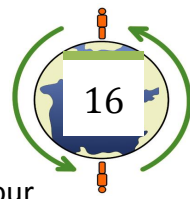
<sup>17</sup> Interview Mr. E: #00:04:47-2#

<sup>18</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:02:50-3#, Interview Mr. C: #00:05:20-2# and Mr. E: #00:09:34-4#

<sup>19</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:03:28-8#, Mr.B: #00:12:34-6#, Mr. E. #00:09:39-9# and Mrs. F: #00:10:04-9#

<sup>20</sup> Interview Mr. C: #00:16:11-8# #, similar answers with Mr. A: #00:11:21-6# and Mrs. F: : #00:10:13-6#

<sup>21</sup> Interview Mrs. F: #00:06:54-9# , similar answers with Mr. A: #00:07:31-5#



The last category consists of goals that teachers mention with regard to their school. Four respondents acknowledge the positive effect of the international exchange on the image of the school. Mr. A stated that internationalization activities are selling points in a conscious “marketing strategy” of the school.<sup>22</sup> Or as Mr. B put it, “any special feature of a school or specialization will draw extra pupils.”<sup>23</sup>

Half of the respondents mention that international exchanges are of positive influence on the cooperation within school. Another interesting issue mentioned by Mr. A, Mr. E and Mrs. F is the increased involvement of parents due to the exchange.<sup>24</sup> Only two teachers make their exchange an explicit part of their curriculum. The organisation of the exchange causes “less extra work if you properly embed it in your subject curriculum,” explained Mr. D.<sup>25</sup> For example, the exchange can be connected to a lesson series, a cross curricular project or even a permanent website shared and updated by the participants.

### **3.4. Which factors (concerns) have a negative effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?**

The final sub-question examines unwanted circumstances that reduce motivation. Identifying these negative concerns mentioned by the interviewees results in a better understanding of the obstacles teachers experience while organizing an international exchange. The mentioned concerns regarding international exchanges are roughly subdivided in time related concerns, concerns of financial nature and organisational concerns. They are mapped out in table 7.

The most mentioned category of concerns deals with the limitation of time. Five respondents indicated that organising an exchange consumes much time, which teachers might rather spend on conventional duties.<sup>26</sup> International exchanges usually extend into the private time of the organisers. Half of the teachers mention that the time spent on organising an exchange exceeds the amount of hours allocated by the school.<sup>27</sup> Mrs. F elaborates, “Teachers take it on as an extra. It takes up a lot of private time and in order to partake in this you give up a lot of personal space. So you need to be willing to do so.”<sup>28</sup>

The second subcategory addresses concerns related to money. Secondary schools rarely have the financial means to finance the exchange which implies that money has to be

<sup>22</sup> Mr. A also indicates that international partnerships are mandatory if a school wants to be certified as a ‘TTO’ or ‘ELOS’ school by the European Platform, Interview Mr. A: #00:06:45-3#

<sup>23</sup> Interview Mr. B: #00:20:19-5#, similar answers Mr.s D: #00:15:01-8# and Mr. E: #00:11:44-9#

<sup>24</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:06:45-3#, Mr. E: #00:08:49-6# and Mrs. F: #00:08:13-8#

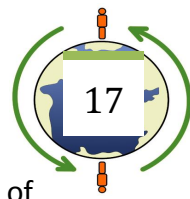
<sup>25</sup> Interview Mrs. D: #00:11:46-9# Interview Mr. B: #00:05:54-9#

<sup>26</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:06:45-3#, Mr. B: #00:07:19-6# #, Mr. C: #00:08:12-8#, Mrs. D: #00:10:26-2# and Mrs. F: #00:09:33-8#

<sup>27</sup> Interview Mr. B: #00:12:43-6#, Mr. C: #00:03:29-8# and Mrs. F: #00:02:12-8#

<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, to minimise the number of missed school days, the exchange often takes places during the holidays. Interview Mrs. F: #00:10:14-9#





generated through, for example, subsidies. Although institutes grant fixed amounts of subsidy yearly, the many forms, the long procedures, and the very realistic change that the request is denied, are cause for five respondents to see the financial dependency as a concern. Mr. B explained, “If we do not receive any money from the European Platform because of quality reasons of too many other bids, the whole thing is cancelled. We are not going to ask for extra money from parents to send their kids all across Europe.”<sup>29</sup>

Half of the respondents perceive international exchanges as expensive in comparison to other school activities.<sup>30</sup> The international exchange implies financial and other risks that need to be insured. Might something go wrong while being abroad, there has to be some financial reserve available. Dealing with financial shortcomings causes the motivation of teachers to drop. Raising alternative funds through other means like sponsoring, or a mandatory parent contribution, are not welcomed by most of the teachers. The international exchange has to be financially feasible or it is simply not organized. “Because if we have to beg and comb, then (the exchange) to me it’s just no fun anymore,” according to Mr. A.<sup>31</sup>

Even when time and money are found, organising the exchange is a category of concerns in itself. Four respondents reply that missing classes, decreasing exam results, or too little enthusiasm among staff members can cause the school management not spend time and resources to start an international exchange.<sup>32</sup> Half of the respondents is also concerned that their students do not receive the same abroad as what they offer themselves.<sup>33</sup> Communicating with foreign schools is also seen as troublesome by half of the respondents.<sup>34</sup> This applies only when it is possible to find suitable foreign partners.<sup>35</sup> This is concluded by organisational concerns that arise during the exchange. As Mr. C summarizes, “There are so many scenarios. We experienced a very serious accident while abroad. Also examples of fighting, theft or vandalism has a negative impact on the organisation, especially if you are responsible for it (the organisation)”.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Interview Mr. B: #00:07:58-9#, similar answers Interview Mr. A: #00:09:11-7#, Mr. C: #00:07:17-4# and Mrs. D: #00:05:08-4# and Mr. E: #00:18:28-3#

<sup>30</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:14:09-5#, Mr. C: #00:11:43-9# Interview Mr. E: #00:17:20-6#

<sup>31</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:12:05-7#

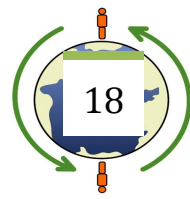
<sup>32</sup> Interview Mr. B: #00:07:19-7#, Mr. C: #00:05:24-6# and Mr. E: #00:14:31-2#

<sup>33</sup> Interview Mr. A: #00:11:51-6#, Mr. B: #00:09:59-0# and Mrs. F: #00:09:33-8#

<sup>34</sup> Interview Mr. B: #00:05:54-9#, Mr. C: #00:14:54-2# and Mr. E: #00:09:41-8#

<sup>35</sup> It is indicated that the demand for international exchanges among Dutch schools is larger than the supply found abroad. This is especially valid for English schools, popular from a bilingual point of view, but they lack the incentive of language learning through exchanges., Interview Mrs. F: #00:09:45-9#

<sup>36</sup> Interview Mr. C: #00:05:27-6#



## **4. Anxious to go abroad? : conclusions and recommendations.**

### **4.1. Mapping out motivation.**

This study set out to investigate the number of international exchanges in Dutch secondary education through investigating the motivation of teachers that organise these activities. The research questions were structured on the three variables that constitute the concept of motivation, being tasks, goals, and concerns (Emmons, 1999, p. 19-21). Answers to these questions were provided through analysing six interviews with teachers involved in international exchanges. As the research questions are answered, concluding recommendations and suggestions for further investigation are given.

### **4.2 Which tasks do teachers fulfil while organising an international exchange?**

This sub-question addresses the tasks that teachers fulfil in the organisation exchanges. Not only to gain insight in their practical duties, but more to assess the importance of teachers and their motivation in the realisation of exchanges. Analysis of the tasks respondents fulfil in preparation of, during, and after the exchange leads to the following conclusions:

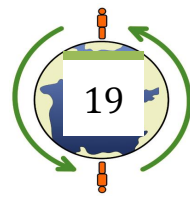
- Teachers fulfil many tasks in the organisation of international exchanges at secondary schools, especially in the preparatory phase of these activities.
- Teachers initiate international exchanges within school. Exemplary exchanges, based on contacts between teachers gained at conferences, indicate that teacher mobility may stimulate internationalisation activities for students.

The conclusion that teachers have an essential role in the organisation of exchanges is not entirely surprising. Foremost because the respondents represent teachers for whom the motivation for the exchange already outweighs the possible objections. These conclusions do confirm that teachers bear many responsibilities within the organisation of the international exchanges. This validates the importance that the motivation of teachers, explored in the other two sub-questions, could have in explaining the number of exchanges within Dutch secondary education. As Mrs. F illustrates, "Success stories are usually related to teachers who really like to do this, but they have to be motivated to do so."<sup>37</sup>

It would be useful to know how many international exchanges for students originate from prior contact between their teachers. This could review the value of international teacher mobility for the amount of international exchanges taking place. This possible correlation between international teacher mobility and international activities for students is an interesting issue for future investigation.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview Mrs. F: #00:10:21-6#



#### **4.3 Which factors (goals) have a positive effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?**

The second sub-question deals with the goals that positively influence the motivation of teachers to organise an exchange. The results showed that these goals can be divided in, goals related to the participants, personal goals and goals for to the school as a whole. The results lead to the following conclusions:

-The motivation of most teachers for organizing exchanges relates to the learning results of the participants. Improved language proficiency is seen as the most important benefit, followed by intercultural enrichment and the social-emotional development that the international exchange encourages.

- The personal goals of teachers are mainly related to their profession and moderately stimulate their motivation. Involved teachers perceive exchanges as an enrichment of their working life. Contact with foreign colleagues and deepened bond with the participants also persuade some teachers to organise an exchange.

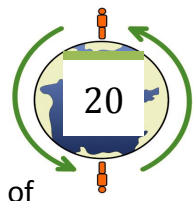
- Goals related to the schools are seen as benefits of the international exchange, not as motives to organize them. However, certain internationalization activities are mandatory if a school wants to be licensed as bilingual and/or internationalized secondary school. In addition, international exchanges are often seen as big selling points in the annual competition for new students.

These conclusions correspond with earlier research on exchanges this field. Oonk (2004, p. 203) is reconfirmed in that teachers experience organising an exchange as very motivating. This research also shows that this motivation originates primarily from working with the participating students, followed by personal and school related motives. Moreover, the respondents indicate that they gain more motivation as a result of the exchange. Prior studies show that motivated teachers are likely to work in the educational sector for a longer period of time (Woolfolk, Hughes & Walkup, 2007; Muijs & Rijneveld, 2007).

#### **4.4. Which factors (concerns) have a negative effect on the motivation to organise an international exchange?**

If organising an exchange was exclusively fun and motivating, the number of exchanges within secondary education would undoubtedly be higher. The final subquestion shows the factors that negatively influence the motivation of teachers to exchange, leading to the following conclusions:

- Most concerns of the respondents involve shortage of time. International exchanges are usually seen as extra work in the private time of the involved teachers. This discourages teachers to organise or partake in international exchanges.



- Financial matters are the next to most important source of concern. The majority of international exchanges depend on external financial support, which implies that it's cancelled if subsidy is denied. Exchanges are also seen relatively costly and high-risk school activities. Having to find alternative income decreases the motivation of teachers to organize exchanges.

- The last category, organisational concerns, shows that the priority of exchanges within the school organization strongly affects the likelihood that teachers organise them. Establishing and maintaining communication with the foreign schools are also experienced as troublesome. Finally, possible accidents, fighting or theft during the exchange influence the eagerness to organise it.

These concerns are named by teachers currently organising exchanges, implying that these objections must weigh heavier on the majority of teachers not yet involved. Ways to overcome these concerns are therefore essential. The time shortage could be remedied by devising the exchange in such a way that, by addressing the mandatory subject curricula, additional time and resources become available.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, only one out of six teachers mentioned the cost-reducing possibilities of ICT, which makes the added value of digital exchanges interesting for future research. Alternative forms of organization, like the international internship program organized by Mr. E, can reduce time and finances simultaneously.<sup>39</sup>

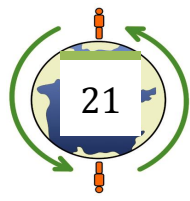
#### **4.5 Teachers and the number of international exchanges in Dutch secondary education.**

This exploratory research investigated the motivation of teachers to organize an exchange. Based on its findings, it must first be concluded that teachers play an essential role in the organisation of international exchanges in secondary education. Their motivation is therefore of influence on the number of international exchanges taking place. The many benefits for teachers, students and schools make international exchanges a versatile source of motivation and educational enrichment

However, keeping teachers is motivated foremost done by avoiding negative circumstances and if resources are explicitly made available by the school management. Allocating enough time especially, not only enables teachers to perform in their regular responsibilities, but also empowers them to the initiate and execute satisfying international exchanges. As long as the goals outweigh the concerns, more teachers can be motivated to organise international exchanges. Seen the amount of international exchanges that currently takes place in secondary education, this is regrettably not the case for the majority of the teaching staff.

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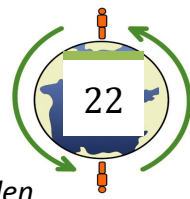
<sup>38</sup> You have to try to make it part of your lessons, than it does not necessarily have to be extra work." Interview Mrs. D: #00:10:26-2#



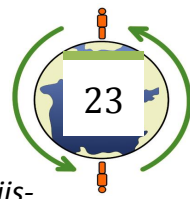
In retrospect, the value of this research in explaining this number needs to be addressed. The execution of this research itself was hindered by several circumstances. The initial setup was too large for the time available for conducting the research. This limited the scope down to a qualitative interpretation of a limited number of interviews. This served the scale of this article, but including more respondents would have increased the representation and validity of the results. Furthermore, the motivation of teachers is not the only variable that determines the number of. The priority of the school management, the willingness of partner schools, and the existing financial possibilities seem influential factors that deserve further investigation as well. This inquiry is merely a stepping stone on which a more extensive research can be conducted.

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