



de stadscoalitie

WORKSHOP LISTENING & ASKING QUESTIONS

'Everything starts with curiosity'

On 12, 13 and 19 October, some 600 first-year social work students from Hogeschool Rotterdam had the opportunity to meet new citizens during four sessions. Mohammed Ali, Johanna Aguillon and Ishmail Kamara took the students on their journey from their home countries to here. What was their childhood like? What did they experience? Why did they have to leave their country? Workshops were organized by Saskia Möhlmann and led by Esseline van de Sande in StoryHouse Belvédère, a house full of stories and heritage.



Team of storytellers



Ishmail Kamara, schrijver & dichter

Through listening, asking questions and researching, the students got to know the narrators, but also vice versa. Thus, themes such as courage, meaningful relationships, having family miles apart and about the image of 'the refugee' were addressed. What can these aspiring social workers do for the new citizens? The diversity of students makes Ishmail hopeful for the future. *"Such a diverse group is good for an inclusive society."*

During the meeting between the students and the storytellers, you could sense a change. "The students entered the conversation relaxed but cautious, throughout the session this grew into surprise and interest," Johanna said. Her message to the future social workers was to use someone's name, the most beautiful word in the world is your name. It makes someone a person and not just a number.



Johanna Aguillon, journalist & regisseur



Mohammed Aklan, HR manager

The four sessions gave the students a chance to get to know the new citizen in a casual and reciprocal way. In addition, it gave our storytellers a chance to meet young residents and share their stories with them. *"I enjoyed passing on empowering life lessons and hope I was able to contribute something to their learning journey,"* says Mohammed. *"The students' interest after the sessions and that some are still in touch with me, makes me proud and fills my heart with joy. I have learnt a lot during this process, but best of all are the connections we have made. This is a great way to create connections and inclusiveness."*

It is with pride and satisfaction that we look back on our collaboration with the Hogeschool Rotterdam and the storytellers. *"The Hogeschool gave us the confidence to lead these encounters and fortunately, we look forward to continue with this project."* Saskia Möhlmann