



ESSEC

« Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ? »

Repeat success for the second promotion

and an extended nationwide plan of action

Cergy, 24 May 2006

On Wednesday 24 May, ESSEC celebrated the completion of the second year of its equal opportunities initiative, “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi?”. For the occasion, screening of a fiction-documentary inspired by the project, produced by Bruno Pounewatch and entitled “Une passerelle entre deux mondes”, was organized. The 23 final-year upper school pupils belonging to the second year of the project also spoke of the benefits they had gained from both a scholastic and personal point of view, as well as their chosen educational path for the next academic year. For the members of ESSEC in charge of the project, the completion by the pupils of their secondary school studies provides confirmation of the success of the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” model, which has been implemented on a national scale as part of the “Ouverture Sociale” group of the Grandes Ecoles Conference.

Mission accomplished for the second promotion

The second year of the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” program will shortly reach its conclusion as the upper school pupils will soon be sitting their Bacculaureate exams.

For the 23 pupils involved, from four different partner schools in Argenteuil, Cergy and Sartrouville, the adventure began back in January 2004. Chosen on the basis of their potential and commitment, they spent every Wednesday afternoon for three years at ESSEC, where they followed with great dedication the various classes prepared for them. These included weekly tutorials with ESSEC students, cultural outings, written and spoken expression workshops, visits to companies, and other assorted activities that complemented their schools studies, thereby enabling the pupils to develop skills such as the desire to learn, fluency of speech, and the ability to argue and debate, all of which will prove essential for high-level university studies.

Following this long period of supervision, the pupils have chosen educational tracks that are either ambitious or, at the very least, more ambitious than the initial plans they had before joining the program.

Of the 23 pupils to have participated:

- 18 aim to apply for a Grande Ecole (engineering, management or political science/preparatory classes or schools with an integrated preparatory section);
- 2 are planning to go to university
- 2 have chosen art schools
- 1 has chosen to pursue studies abroad.

All the pupils are in agreement that the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” program has enabled them to broaden their horizons and pursue a more ambitious educational direction.

“For three years the program was my reason for going to school each week; every Wednesday I’d go home a different person, with a desire to persevere, go far and succeed! (...) As I’ve always been interested in biology and scientific research, I’ve applied to a number of engineering schools with integrated preparatory sections, my dream being to be accepted by the UTC de Compiègne” explains **Marie-Laure**, final-year student at the lycée Braque , Argenteuil.

“The Pourquoi pas moi ?” program has been really rewarding for me from a cultural point of view. It has given me the chance to visit museums, go to the Opera, see exhibitions, none of which I’d have had access to otherwise”, comments **Christophe** of the lycée Galilée, Cergy.

The ESSEC challenge: to go that one step further

The second year of the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” program has confirmed the success of the initiative. The first batch of pupils to have completed the program in May 2005 showed a preference for an ambitious educational path: eight are now in preparatory classes, three have joined schools upon successful completion of entrance exams (two of whom are now on the post-baccalaureate EPSCI course at ESSEC), one is at university studying medicine, two economy, and two in technical school.

As part of the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” program, ESSEC is currently collaborating with eight partner schools and totals 115 participating secondary school pupils:

- 23 in 12th grade
- 40 in 11th grade
- 52 in 10th grade

44 ESSEC students participate on a voluntary, unpaid basis as tutors to the pupils.

The “Pourquoi pas moi ?” team is also working with the schools on a complementary program entitled “Deuxième cercle”, aimed at sharing the values of the project with a wider audience.

Taking a local project to a national level

Implemented at local level in and around Cergy, the “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” project was designed by ESSEC Business School in partnership with the Délégation Interministérielle à la Ville, with a view to developing it at national level.

Upon signature on 17 January 2005 of the charter for equal opportunities for entry into top-level academic institutions, the “Ouverture Sociale” working group was formed as part of the Grandes Ecoles Conference. Approximately 100 schools currently take an active part in the debate on equal opportunities and social desegregation.

A number of grandes écoles, management and engineering schools are now developing their own program based upon the example of “Pourquoi pas moi?”, in the Paris area, Lille, Marseille, Toulouse, Rennes, Nancy and Strasbourg, to name but a few. Each and every one remains faithful to the fundamental principles of the project: the same conditions of entry for every candidate (with no specially adapted sections); progressively more demanding course content; a genuine responsibility to the local area ; and the establishment of partnerships with a variety of local figures and institutions, both public and private.

About the project “ Une prépa, une grande école : pourquoi pas moi ?”

In 2002, ESSEC created the project “Une Grande Ecole : Pourquoi pas moi ?” in partnership with the Délégation Interministérielle à la Ville. The aim was to improve the chances for young people from modest backgrounds attending schools that receive support from local authorities, of pursuing ambitious university-level studies by tutoring them during their last three years of secondary school education. The project forms part of a broader ambition to widen the recruitment circle of Grandes Ecoles to a larger public, and removing quotas in so doing. Firmly committed to the area in and around Cergy, the program designed by ESSEC has already made a name for itself nationwide.

About ESSEC

Founded in 1907, ESSEC Business School, Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales, is a major player in international management education. Teaching is ensured by faculty of international repute and well-known business managers. Together they perpetuate a tradition of academic excellence, encourage individual creativity and the development of personalities as well as the spirit of openness that characterizes ESSEC Business School at the service of the economic and social sectors.

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