

by Christopher Murphy

A Mobile Mindset

MY ELDEST NIECE, WHO WILL GRADUATE THIS MAY from the University of Delaware with a major in art history and a minor in Italian, is an example of the “First Globals” generation that John Zogby describes in this issue of *International Educator*. Zogby’s label for this age group is based on his opinion research in the United States. An internationally renowned pollster and commentator, Zogby defines the First Globals as the generation born between 1979 and 1991. As he notes in his interview, more than half of these young people have traveled abroad, are likely to look upon themselves as “citizens of the planet Earth,” and two in five “expect” to live and work in a foreign nation at some point their lives.

This is certainly a very different generation than the one I grew up in. When I was the age that my niece is now (I graduated in 1983) I had only been abroad once—and that was during a two-week-long family trip to Canada when I was 14. I would certainly not have had the slightest concept of what being a “citizen of the planet Earth” might mean, and neither I, nor very likely any of my friends, had an expectation that we would live and work abroad at some point in our lives.

But for my niece’s age cohort, Zogby’s statistical data fit like a glove. She has studied abroad twice, once in Italy and once in India. These experiences have expanded her frame of reference and added to a certain maturity that comes naturally to her now. And her scope of options is clearly broader than those that I would have perceived at her age. For example, with jobs currently scarce for fresh university grads, she has included in her post-graduation options the idea of interning abroad to gain valuable work experience and résumé points.

Her mindset includes an expectation of global mobility no one in my generation would have felt. And, I believe that her younger siblings and cousins will be even more exposed to, and comfortable with, international and global concepts when they are in their early twenties.

As we see in our cover story, “Going Mobile,” and reflected in several other articles in this issue of *IE*, mobility is the name of the game in education today. Despite the recent worldwide economic downturn, more and more students across the globe are expecting to include international experience in their higher education and their professional lives. **IE**

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