



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Most of us were not around when FIYTO (The Federation of International Youth and Travel Organisations) and ISTC (International Student Travel Confederation), were formed sixty years ago. With the merging of the two as WYSE Travel Confederation three years ago, the founding principles of the original associations remained central, and it is worth remembering how it all started.

Some of you may be familiar with the story of Jean Barrand, a former French officer active in the resistance in World War II, who took his first groups of young people from two schools in the North of France and Brittany on an all-expenses-paid visit to Koblenz—an area which was occupied at the time by the French army.

His goal was to assist young people in developing an increased awareness of others, and to bring them to a greater understanding of other cultures, so that the wars that had ravaged the world in the 1940s had a lesser chance of happening again.

Now, some sixty years later, our ALTO community keeps this tradition of international and cultural understanding alive. The world is very different today from what it was when the original associations were established. It is of course necessary for there to be a commercial element in order to keep the organisations going, but we also need to acknowledge the core values at the heart of our Association—an Association which has as its founding principle that of building a community around leaders committed to providing the very best language and educational travel programmes for students.

We all know that ALTO is about building relationships—long-lasting partnerships built on mutual trust as well as new business relationships that are just beginning to bear fruit. The aim of ALTO members is to create the best experiences possible for our students. While the landscape has changed, the core values of our community remain the same—and give us the strength and resilience to be creative and innovative in difficult economic times.

The past three years have seen many changes, not just in the language travel industry, but in ALTO as well with our smooth transition from FIYTO to WYSE Travel Confederation.

Likewise, the world is changing for the student. As nations and ideals become more fragmented, language and educational travel are just as important, if not more so, as they were when the roots of our association were established in 1948.

Therefore, we invite the wider ALTO community to use ALTO Connect as a platform for discussion within our industry. Let us use this as an opportunity to share, innovate, debate, and above all else, [connect](#).

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Chair  
ALTO