**My addiction***What can you not live without?*

**Colourful bags and people**

**Albertine Zanting (1970), policy officer and trainer in intercultural group dynamics, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences educational institute**

“When I was about six, my grandmother taught me how to sew doll clothes on a hand-powered sewing machine. I still have it. As a teenager with a limited clothing budget, I made many of my own clothes; I even considered the fashion academy. But it ended up being International Relations and Russian. I got a job and money to buy clothes; sewing kind of fell by the wayside.

Then in 2010, a coach asked me to think of a way that I could express myself creatively. That’s how making bags entered the picture. I can use a lot of creativity doing this. I transform an idea that I come up with on my own into a nice combination of fabric, colour and shape, plus the technical aspects of how to best make the bag; it’s great. And almost all women love bags.”

**Shop**“I was getting more and more requests from people to make custom bags, which is how the idea came about to take my creations ‘to market’. I opened a ‘shop’ on the Etsy website, and I’ve sold bags to customers in Australia and the US. It’s really cool when someone chooses my bag from the twenty thousand bags that are offered there.

My bags are usually colourful, and that’s where I see a link with my work. I also love colourful people, and cultural diversity is my other passion. The intercultural communication programme didn’t exist ‘in my time’, so I completed this master’s in 2008. And now that FHML is becoming increasingly international, I can combine my passion with my work more and more. For example, I give courses on intercultural group dynamics to students and staff.”

**Bag of tricks**“To help illustrate my ideas about diversity and internationalisation at our faculty, I wrote a policy document—and I also designed a bag. Using my ‘bag of tricks’, I presented to my superiors what I think cultural diversity at our faculty could look like, for example, with more international students and staff, but also with a more international PBL that makes more explicit use of the diverse backgrounds of students. I see a lot of opportunities.

Because the subject fascinates me and I would like to do even more with it in the future, I’m currently writing a proposal for PhD research on cultural diversity. If I can realise that at our own university, it would be fantastic.”

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/BagsOfOriginality?ref=ss_profile>