

VVOB SchoolLinks Programme

Summary

VVOB is the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance, a non-profit organisation. Due to our operations in the south and our establishment in Flanders we are in a unique position to form a bridge between both parts of the world. By means of our “SchoolLinks” Programme (“Scholenbanden” in Dutch), we try to support and stimulate schools in Flanders and in the south to establish a sustainable global school partnership.

What is a school link?

A (VVOB) global school partnership or a school link is a sustainable and equity-based partnership between schools in Flanders and schools in southern countries focusing on educational goals. Schools engage themselves to cooperate and communicate with each other and to maintain the cooperation process for several years.

Why a school partnership?

The increasing globalisation of economies, technologies, cultures, societies affect more and more our local context. Education needs to prepare our children for this changing world.

A school partnership can be a tool to counter new educational challenges in an interesting and contemporary way. It wants to promote an international dimension in education. By means of a direct long term relationship, pupils and teachers can share knowledge and experiences about their culture, values, dreams and worries. In this way, a school link brings the world into the classroom. For children, it is a very pleasant way to tackle learning issues and to make global issues very concrete. They can widen their view on the world and acquire new skills (intercultural skills, ICT, language,...). For teachers, the exchange of good practices can improve the quality of their learning and teaching.

For Whom?

SchoolLinks is open for primary and secondary schools. For each interested school in the south, we need to find an interested counter part in Flanders. Therefore, the programme is limited to five schools per country.

In general, VVOB tries to find interested schools who are somehow connected to the VVOB programme in the south, or who are situated in the near surroundings of our operations. This makes support and assistance a lot easier.

Other key elements are the involvement and support of the school board, the capacities and enthusiasm of the teacher team, motivation and realistic expectancies and access to email and internet.

Contribution of VVOB

VVOB facilitates the partnership and supports schools to make their partnership stronger. Nevertheless, VVOB is not taking the lead in the school partnerships. The responsibility for the partnership and for the success or failure of it, is completely in hands of the schools. The schools themselves decide how they work together and what they do.

The facilitating and supporting role of VVOB consists of:

- *Selecting and linking interested schools*
- *Helping with the first contacts and communication*
- *Inspiring schools on how they can build on the partnership*
- *Giving advise on all kind of questions concerning the partnership*
- *Small financial support to cover the expenses the committed schools eventually may have.*

Commitment of the schools

The initiative, responsibility and execution of the school link activities are in hand of both schools. The success of the partnership relies on the effort both schools make. Good and frequent communication is essential. The support of the school headmasters and a commitment of several school members to form a team are also key factors.

Procedure

The schools develop a joint action plan which is submitted by the Flemish school to VVOB in Brussels. In this action plan, the two schools describe how they will develop their partnership in the coming year and detail the actions they are going to undertake. At the end of the year, the schools submit an activity report.

More information about the concept of SchoolLinks, the possibilities to participate and procedures to follow is actually available on the web site www.scholenbanden.be/english.