



Through the SchoolLinks programme, VVOB supports schools in Flanders and in its partner countries to create and form an interesting and sustainable partnership. This news flash informs all participating schools of facts and tips about school partnerships, updates on the programme, and stories from schools that joined in.

Thinking of linking...

Good news: the VVOB SchoolLinks programme will expand in the following school year! Several new school profiles from VVOB partner countries have been put on the Dutch version of the SchoolLinks website, followed by a call to Flemish candidate-schools.

When the Flemish schools register online, they can indicate which Southern school they would like to look into a little further. Together with VVOB, they go through a process of getting informed about the philosophy of SchoolLinks, the added-value, possible pitfalls, the procedure of applying and searching a suitable partner. **From September 2010 on, VVOB will be able to support and assist at least 10 new school partnerships between Flemish and Southern schools.**



Tips and tricks

- It is essential that **communication** between the schools continues and develops independently from VVOB. Practical elements can become obstacles; such as the language difference, difficult internet connection, the way of communicating, etc. For these reasons, it is important to make good and clear arrangements with your partner: what do both schools expect and what is realistic? Who will communicate, when, how and about what?
- When you receive an e-mail, letter or parcel from your partner, don't forget to **send them a short reaction**. Even if you need more time to make an elaborated response, it is good to let them know (through e-mail or a text message) that their post has arrived. If not, your partner might think something went wrong...
- International cooperation is not easy, nor is a school link. Schools in the north and the south may have different perspectives and ideas of what a good school link or good communication is. And they can have stereotypic imaging of each other as well... Generalisations or simplifying can distort your view of a complex and diverse reality. It is important to recognise these differences, but also to seek similarities. These might be bigger than you expect! **Cultural differences are seen as an enrichment that can benefit the educational exchange between schools.**
- VVOB does not provide support for the development of educational activities in the classroom or the school. Nonetheless, we want to help teachers in using the school link for educational activities. On the SchoolLinks website you can find some ideas - big and small - that might inspire the design of your school link.: <http://www.scholenbanden.be/english>
- If you have some issues concerning the implementation of your activities or starting up good communication with your partner, let us know, so we can assist you.





News from schools

👉 **Goede Lucht (Anderlecht): “a first image of Surinam life”**

Since this school year, we, Goede Lucht, launched a cross-cultural cooperation with the Surinamese school OS Clevia. We have chosen a school in Surinam, as the language in school is Dutch. This facilitates communication between the two countries.



We chose O.S. Clevia because the profile of the school appealed to us. Conversely, this also happened. We wanted to have a school link with a school in the South so that our students can come in contact with other cultures and customs, and we can learn from each other. We also strive for a long-term collaboration. We begin with a small-scale project, but over the years we want the school link to become a real part of our school. We also want to promote global education and both preschoolers and elementary school children to give their input.

Everything started with an action plan. Both OS Clevia as our partner proposed a number of activities for the first year. These were then matched, as we pursue the same goals. Monitoring of the action plan and completing the planned actions has not always been straightforward. Waiting for a reply from our Surinam partner (due to lack of internet access) or preparing and sending a package, took more time than we thought. Yet now we have weekly contact with the director of the school via e-mail.



As an introduction, we made them an identity kit. Each class could make something different: with drawings, photos or a short movie. In response we received their kit. This gave us a first image of the Surinamese life. Anyone can follow the growth of our project on the our “Suri-board”. We also made Christmas presents for our friends in Surinam, and they were extremely happy.

Stereotypes were broken, and not just of the students, even of the teachers... We were surprised that they have resources we did not expect (eg a climbing rack on the playground,...). Everyone is thrilled to learn about life over there. We also try to pass on information on teaching and learning, the pupils, life in the classroom and beyond, the courses given, human rights,... SchoolLinks is a very positive experience for us. We hope that our school cooperation will grow even stronger!



👉 **OS Clevia (Surinam) organises Belgian Meals Day**

On February 26th, public school OS Clevia organised a Belgian Meals Day. Teachers, pupils and parents could get acquainted with the Belgian cuisine. Rosanda Courtar, a local VVOB employee in Surinam, reported in words and photographs.

Belgian dishes, I hear you think ... Yes, because OS Clevia got into contact with Goede Lucht in Anderlecht, Belgium, through the VVOB SchoolLinks programme. These two schools were linked and they combined forces... At the same time, Flemish students from teaching colleges are doing their internship in the school, so they could also follow up on the SchoolLinks activities.



On February 26th, the Surinamese teachers and Belgian trainees, dressed in the colours of their national flag, prepared for the Belgian Meals Day. The acquaintance was not unilateral, because the Surinamese delicacies were also present. And what a rush at the stands! One wanted noodles, fried rice or pancakes and the other found the Saoto the best dish. The stands were very nicely decorated in the colours of the Belgian flag, with Pang's (shawls) and a Chinese lantern. That is what I call multicultural!

The students and teachers of OS Clevia and Goede Lucht are regularly in contact with each other. The parents could also see the e-mails and presentations of the school link in an exhibition.



Belgium and Surinam were highlighted: there were maps of both countries. The children in Surinam and Belgium have also seen pictures of each other. Their parents were very interested and the pupils were very proud! OS Clevia has a very enthusiastic team, including the school link coordinator, Ms. Brashuis, who led the show and filmed all the activities.

The purpose of this Belgian Day to get acquainted with each other's habits and culture. By getting to know the Belgian cuisine, Surinamese students could also experience what their Belgian e-mail friends talked about.

👉 School agendas

Several schools have let us know which activities they are planning. Below you can find a short overview of some interesting initiatives in the schools. When you have planned something similar, or you are exchanging presentations or introduction packages, you can always inform the VVOB office in your country.



- **Lamu Girls Secondary School** has send a their partner, Hotel and Tourism School Spermalie, a powerpoint presentation, whereby introducing their school and the students.
- **April, 2: Maria Assumptalyceum** 🇳🇵 Africa Introduction Day with African food, a free podium and a SchoolLinks logo competition.
- **April, 2: SBSO Zonneweelde** 🇳🇵 General SchoolLinks Introduction Day.
- **April, 2: Primary school Molenveld** 🇳🇵 Visit to Matonge, an African quarter in Brussels.
- **April, 24: KA Mariakerke** 🇳🇵 Open School Day with a Rwandan corner, meal and workshop.
- **May, 8 Shim in Antwerp** . 🇳🇵 Open school day: Their partner school Imeao 3 made a workpiece on the Surinamese culture that will be shown during the Open School Day in Antwerp
- **May 17-21: Middenschool H.Hart in Bree** 🇳🇵 Zambia Sensibilisation Week.



Contact

For more information, contact the regional VVOB office.
Details can be found on the SchoolLinks website:

www.scholenbanden.be/english

Met steun van de
Vlaamse overheid

