



Dear schools,

The SchoolLinks team wishes you an interesting and surprising 2012! We are excited to see what the year will bring and we hope for a dynamic interaction between the partner schools. Next to that, our new SchoolLinks programme is ready to take-off.

But before getting started, we wish to congratulate you for submitting your joint action plans on time, despite the busy (Christmas) holidays in Belgium and in the partner countries! A first, quick look at the plans show that a lot of effort has been put into them and that you really feel like getting started. You will receive our advice shortly. Hopefully, the first activities will take place soon.

This newsletter brings some interesting announcements and tips. As usual, we close with a brief testimony from a school.



Enjoy your reading!

Competition

VVOB, the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and technical Assistance, is celebrating its 30th birthday this year. Therefore, we have launched a competition in all our partner countries and in Flanders on the theme **Active Teaching and Learning**. This refers to a broad scale of pupil-orientated, context-relevant and activating methods, that have entered our educational system in the past few years and decades.

The competition is open to all teachers from primary and secondary education, student-teachers and their professors. The main purpose is to inspire each other and to exchange experiences on this theme across nation borders.

The three best contributions within each category (primary education, secondary education and teacher training) will win **prices** with respective values of 200, 150 and 100 dollars. Moreover, the winner of each category will win a **study visit**, be it to Belgium (if the winner is from one of the partner countries), or to one of our partner countries (if a Flemish school wins the price). You can find all additional information on <http://www.scholenbanden.be/?q=en/competition>. We hope to receive many interesting contributions. **The deadline is 15 March 2012.**

Tip

- When a meeting of the SchoolLinks team in your school takes place and you are planning certain activities or you are making arrangements, feel free to send us your **report**. Writing down the main issues and plans is very helpful, to yourselves and to us. By doing so, you keep us informed on your progress and in turn we can inform our colleagues in the partner country (if relevant or necessary).

Bloggers

Shortly after the city to city cooperation between the community of **Bierbeek** (in Belgium) and **Oña** (in





Ecuador) took off, the idea to start a real exchange between the schools was born. The Flemish schools **'t Klavertje Bierbeek**, **Sint Pietersschool Korbeek-Lo** and **St.-Janscollege Meldert** are now linked to the group of schools Escuela Ester Ullauri, Escuela José Serrano, Escuela Emilio Arévalo and Colegio Técnico Susudel. Their main goal is to bring the link between the communities closer to the youth.

The schools want to create an involvement between 'North' and 'South', increase awareness of each other and to put a process of world citizenship into motion. Apart from many activities about the partner country, they have also established **a blog as the main exchange channel** between the schools and the people from Bierbeek and Oña. Take a look at their blog: <http://hermanamiento.wordpress.com>.



KAM in Rwanda

The journey was first and foremost about the **Greenery project**, focusing on climate change and green energy. Secondly, the school wanted to extend their school link with the secondary school Kiruhura. Sara and Shauni, the climate ambassadors of KAM, Mrs. Vanlommel and Mrs. Christiaens, left for Rwanda in September 2011. A report by **Shauni Cloostermans**:

*We had been looking forward to it for so long! Finally, on Saturday September 10th, we left for Kigali, Rwanda's capital. When we visited the crowded city, we did not know what to look at first! We spent the first night with a **host family**. The following morning we had a delicious breakfast with bananas and then took a small bus heading to the North-East of the country. Our next stop was **a primary school near to the volcanoes**. Hundreds of young children ran towards us and after having shaken their hands, a local project **protecting mountain gorillas** was explained to us. Our second stop-over was in Gisenyi, where we visited a **science school** and where we took a nightly stroll to Lake Kivu.*



*On Tuesday we had two hours of **biology**: it was interesting to see how the teachers manage to teach their class in an interesting way, even though they do not have the same means our teachers have. It was taught in English, which, together with Kinyarwanda, is the official language in Rwanda.*

*On Wednesday we left for our final destination, the school the whole trip was really about: **Kiruhura secondary school**. We travelled by bus again, but heading South this time. We were welcomed cordially by the head teacher and a group of pupils. They showed us around the school and then we met the other pupils. Everybody was assembled in the canteen where we gave **our first speech for more than 300 people!***

*We were in class again on Thursday en sat together with the **SchoolLinks team** in our partner school. Friday was our day off. We went to the city's public swimming pool. Obviously, as the only white people, we stood out of the crowd...*

*Saturday was a long day for everybody: we were very busy working on our school link. We made a notice board, wrote letters... The pupils were very interested and it was fun working with them. At night, we had to say goodbye. After a fantastic **dance performance** of some girls, it was our turn to entertain the crowd... Rwanda has been a unique experience. **This was not a goodbye, we will definitely meet again!***

Subscribing to or unsubscribing from this newsletter can be done on www.scholenbanden.be. The Dutch newsletter is translated into English, Spanish and French. You can subscribe to these versions automatically by selecting one of the languages.

Thanks to **Marieke Vanlerberghe**, our voluntary translator for this English newsletter.

Contact

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

www.scholenbanden.be

Met steun van de Vlaamse overheid



Vlaams Agentschap voor Internationale Samenwerking