



Dear SchoolLinks fan,

The new school year has taken off in Flanders, so it is time to get back into full gear.

Katrien Goris is back from maternity leave, and she is ready to reconnect with the schools and start new exciting projects. Elke IJzerman has finished her temporary project and has left the team at the end of October.

We wish you all very successful SchoolLinks activities in the coming months.

The SchoolLinks-team

## SPOTTED

### 'Meet & greet' with an idol from overseas

When teacher Ben from the **Don Bosco school in Groot-Bijgaarden** was surfing the internet, his eye caught an upcoming show of a certain **Jack Parrow**, who was introduced as a **South African rapper**. He imagined it to be a fun activity as an introduction for their newly started schoollink with a school from **Stellenzicht** in South Africa.

Together with some students they bought the tickets and decided to check with their peers from South Africa if they did indeed know about this Jack Parrow? As it turned out he is hugely popular there and they could sense their excitement all the way back to Flanders.

Thus arose the idea to try and arrange a **meet & greet** with him and propose to do a little interview on film with questions listed by the students from Stellenzicht. That way they could 'virtually' meet their idol too. Who would have thought this to happen when they first started to plan the SchoolLink?

What also struck the students from Don Bosco during the show is that the music sounds a lot like the music they listen to. It might sound a bit crazier than what they are used to, but surely it was surprising to them that it was so much more modern than what they first associated with South African music. **A perfect way to break down stereotypes and get to know the real life in the South!**



## Special visit from Zambia for a musical premiere

Right at the end of the previous school year in Flanders, **primary school De Belhamel** welcomed **4 guests from their partner school** for the final episode of their three year long cooperation, which resulted in a real musical named **Vredon VI**. VVOB caught up with them during the final rehearsals and was allowed to ask some questions in between the takes.

*What made you choose music as a theme for this cooperation?*

**Music teacher Grace:** Music as a theme for the exchange between the schools is very interesting because it allows you to **show part of your culture** to others. Culture in Belgium sometimes seems a bit hidden, as if it is not often brought to life.

*What else did you pick up during your stay here?*

**Dorcus and Jenipher:** Belgium is really developed. Students have a lot of **respect** for the materials used in the classes and they are seldom without supervision. There is always some one around. Here in Belgium, **children spend a lot of time with their parents**; this is not so much the case in Zambia. Children are not always helped with their homework by their parents.

**Principal Mr Foster:** Teachers in Zambia struggle with their role as teacher. They have to take on some of the duties of the parents. We are planning to use our experiences from the trip to focus on these issues during upcoming parent meetings. But we will build this **awareness** step by step since we need to start from zero.

*Are there any other ideas that you picked up to implement in the SchoolLink?*

**Mr Foster:** In Zambia we start the school day by singing a song on the playground. Here we saw that they do **gymnastics exercises before the lessons** start. This gave the students so much energy to start their day. This idea is something we could start to implement without much effort. It would be good to try it since there is no longer anything like physical education in our curriculum.

*You are also going to perform in the musical, how are the rehearsals going?*

**Dorcus and Jenipher:** We are not nervous to perform in front of a big theatre full of children and adults. The students of De Belhamel aren't either; they are all very well prepared. In Zambia we don't have much opportunities to perform and to showcase children's talents. Belgium can really inspire us in that regard.

**Grace:** Teachers here really do give a lot of space to **children's talents**. But besides the lack of experience in this matter, organising such big shows like this musical would be a big financial challenge for us.



## Capacity Building

...is the **exchange of educational experiences** between teachers or principals whereby knowledge and skills that are gained, **help carrying out their teaching assignment**. It can revolve around **sharing good practices**, exchanging methods or solving problems.

Lots of schools from the South are very interested not only to focus on exchanges between students, but also to learn from each other since few teachers have access to in-service training. The contact and cooperation with colleagues from a different context with a highly valued educational system gives an unique opportunity and is a strong motivation to get involved in a SchoolLink.

### → Some Examples:

- During a visit from the Thompsonschool (Suriname) to their partner school Zonneweelde in Lommel in Belgium, they were very impressed with their system of classification, so it was decided to try and implement it with the help of an intern in their own school.
- Teachers from Jonghelinckshof in Antwerp in Belgium helped installing an audio cabinet for children with hearing impairments in their Zimbabwean partner school. During their visit to the school the teachers trained their colleagues on the use and maintenance.
- PTI Eeklo from Belgium picked up lots of valuable lessons from their partner school Keur Moussa in Senegal on how to work with waste management on school grounds.



The examples show that the **benefits are equal for partner schools in Flanders and the South**. It challenges traditional ways of solving problems and tackling issues. Thus it allows for new insights and inspirations to come from looking at your own practice with a different view.

### → How to approach it:

- **Give it time!** Capacity building doesn't have to be a top priority from the first moment. A first encounter with your partner school is the ideal setting to discuss this and identify a topic.
- **Search interfaces!** What fields of expertise exist in both the schools, what are the communal interests, what are your shared interests?
- **Small is beautiful.** It is not about training or coaching your partner school in a certain field of expertise. It's about creating space to exchange about educational insights besides learning about each others culture and way of life.
- **Learning by doing.** It is also not about sharing big pedagogical theories and manuals. It evolves around learning from each others praxis, about questioning each other, sharing tips and finding solutions for each others daily needs in class.



## SUPPORT

# Deadline Submission new actionplan

Don't forget that the deadline for new action plans is set on December 31th. So be sure to get your work done by that date with your partner school.

- You can find templates for both action plans and end reports online. Also guidelines to clarify the procedure are available in English, French and Spanish. You can download them [here](#).
- Be sure to browse the website for examples of other action plans that can inspire you.
- Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or remarks.



## CALENDAR

### October

Visit from the South African schools of Stellenzicht Groendal, Waveren and Mooi Uitsig to their partnerschools of Don Bosco Groot Bijgaarden, Regina Caelilyceum Dilbeek, Mariaberg and Wigo Essen.

Visit from Unescoschool Koekelberg to Nouveaux Horizons Kikwit in DR Congo and Scharrel Minderhout to Montessorischool in Otavalo in Ecuador.

### 31st of December

Submission actionplans!

## Contact

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