



Annual Report 2009
Great prospects



Colophon

This Annual Report is the result of a joint effort of all WVOB staff members and partners all over the world.

Text

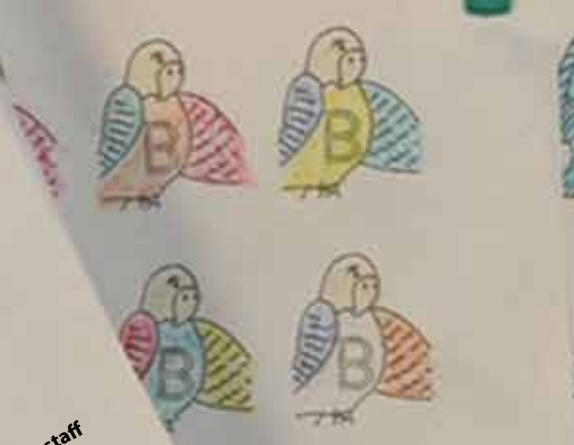
Amalia Rahamat, Astrid Scholten, Bart Dewaele, Brecht Martens, Carl Beel, Carla Bracke, Catherine Van Even, Damien Sebagarwa Mberabagabo, Erik Merens, Evelien Lammaing, Frédérique Bastin, Gwen Lemey, Hanne Huysmans, Hilde Lemey, Ils De Bondt, Inge Bennenbroek, Jan De Wilde, Jan Geusens, Jef Peeraer, Jeroen De Wilde, Kristine Smets, Kristine van Maldegheem, Kunda Kasote, Leen Lieckens, Liesbeth Overmeire, Louisa Kadzo, Lut Laenen, Margret Mutsambwa, Martine Hendrickx, Mercedes Mendoza, Michelle Venneman, Michiel De Mylle, Mqaphelisi Sibanda, Nguyen Thi Thu Nguyet, Nico Vromant, Piet De Vuyst, Pieter-Jan De Marez, Rachael Were, Sammy Deprez, Satin Soekhoe, Sofie Desmet, Stefaan Van Mulders, Tille van Horenbeeck, Wilfried Theunis

Photos

Brecht Martens, Dieter Telemans, Evelien Lammaing, Goele Drijkoningen, Gilberte Verbeeck, Hans Vanderspikken, Hester Jonkhart, Ils De Bondt, Jan Van Ongevalle, Martine Hendrickx, Masimba Mupira, Michel Triest, Nikolas Bosscher, Peter Van Gils, Sammy Deprez, Stefaan Vande Walle, Takunda Hove, Veerle Cnudde, Wouter Kersbergen

Coordination and Design

Erik Merens



Content

Preface.....	5
Introduction.....	7
VVOB in Flanders.....	9
SchoolLinks.....	10
Traineeship Programme.....	12
VVOB in the 'South'.....	15
Overview 2009.....	16
Cambodia.....	18
DR Congo.....	20
Ecuador.....	22
Kenya.....	24
Rwanda.....	26
Surinam.....	28
Vietnam.....	30
Zambia.....	32
Zimbabwe.....	34
Financial report.....	37
Balance sheet.....	38
P&L.....	38
Annex.....	39

Responsible editor

Bart Dewaele

VVOB vzw

*Flemish Association for Development
Cooperation and Technical Assistance*

Handelsstraat 31

1000 Brussels

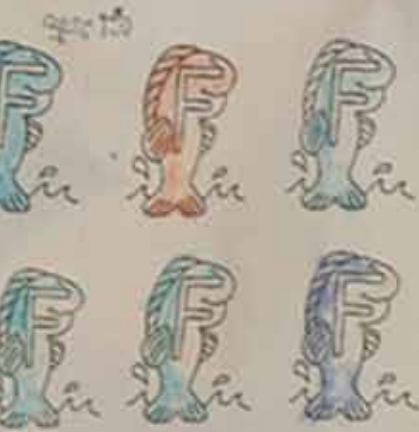
Belgium

T • +32 (0)2 209 07 99

F • +32 (0)2 209 07 98

E • info@vvob.be

W • www.vvob.be





Preface

*Enough **spice** and **colour***

Dear reader,

When you land at the airport N'Djili in Kinshasa, you are taken back in time. The reception building was once an airport, the road to the capital used to be in concrete and asphalt, almost all vehicles were cars and trucks and even the modern hotel is reminiscent of the days of yore.

The following day, when visiting a school, it is clear that the people themselves are the driving force behind the system. Hundreds of diligent students actively participate in the classroom. The teachers are on duty and dynamically give their lessons. The (old) school headmaster proudly presents the school and the inspector of the Ministry provides training to the teaching staff.

Exactly in these people VVOB wants to continue to invest by supplying tools and methodologies for teachers, headmasters and inspectors, who contribute to better education. VVOB strives to achieve this especially through existing channels and by strengthening these structures. In Congo we notice that the instruments are provided and implemented, even in the small rural schools we visited. This is exactly what VVOB stands for: a sustainable anchoring of improvement processes within the existing structures. In this way, we succeed in connecting the policy level (macro) and the level of implementation (micro), which carries out our identity.

Simultaneously, this brings along a great challenge. The transition from project to programme approach requires appropriate instruments, a well-defined vision, strong involvement of partners, a clear focus and firm goals... We can count on a team of people with great strength and willingness, so we take on this challenge with self-confidence.

Finally, it is important to stress that VVOB ascribes a significant task to its Northern Operations. Facilitating partnerships between educational institutions, exchange of expertise and offering traineeship opportunities for juniors,... What has priority in this list is the realisation of a well-defined, sustainable framework for establishing partnerships between schools in Flanders and schools in the South.

This already gives us enough spice and colour to look forward to what the future will bring!

Stefaan Van Mulders
President of VVOB vzw
Administrator-General of the Flemish Youth Welfare Agency





Introduction

A clear strategy, a fixed course



Development is in constant flux. Economic and political factors change our habitats in the South. Trends in the development sector challenge donors and implementing organisations to make new choices and revise their approaches. To retain a distinctive identity when going through these various external stimuli, it is important to make strategic choices. In 2009 VVOB takes a clear step forward, starting from the vision and mission that was previously determined.

The vision involves two broad objectives:

- **poverty alleviation** through the development of education in the South,
- and **broadening public support** in Flanders for development cooperation.

Our mission goes more deeply into this:

Based on strategic partnerships, we work result-oriented from the meso-level (between the policy (macro) and local level (micro)) on:

- *sustainable solutions to problems of education and training in the context of local policies in developing countries,*
- *and more and stronger solidarity between Flanders and the developing countries.*

To achieve this, we support programmes for local capacity building, through a balanced range of resources, services, networking and exchange.

Strategic objectives

Based on this vision and mission, and taking into account the momentum of the many stakeholders of the organisation, the Board of Directors identifies **eight strategic objectives** in 2009. These can be divided into substantive and supportive objectives.

Substantive objectives

1. The cycle and support of programmes in the South is strengthened in function of effective and visible results of clear target groups.
2. The concept "specialising in the South" is clear (focus on education).
3. A relevant "SchoolLinks" operation contributes to the social support for development cooperation.

Supporting objectives

4. The institutional positioning of VVOB in the Belgian panorama of development cooperation and in the Flemish scene of international cooperation is clear and strengthened.
5. A policy cycle and a system for its management (monitoring) exists for the entire organisation (VVOB vzw).
6. Financial health results from stabilising the equity capital and beginning diversification of donors.
7. The labour culture and conditions ensure that employees with high capacities are and stay attracted.
8. The internal and external communication of the organisation increases in quality and quantity.

Defining these strategic priorities helps us to make clear choices in 2009. Some examples... To specialise in education and development, we start preparing an international VVOB seminar, scheduled for spring 2010. Simultaneously, we launch an assessment of our education programmes in the South. VVOB is a public non-profit organisation that wants to be relevant for the sector by taking the initiative to establish a Belgian platform on education and development cooperation. The Flemish programme 'SchoolLinks' gets into its stride and appears to meet expectations.

Concerning the supporting objectives, there is still some work to be done. However, it is certain that whoever meets VVOB personnel, generally is quickly convinced of their high capabilities. Contributing to their pride, VVOB increasingly and effectively positions itself communicatively, and is financially healthy.

In order to achieve all the goals extensively, we take the time until 2012. **The path already appears to show great prospects!**

Bart Dewaele

Director-General VVOB vzw

VVOB in Flanders

A bridge between educational actors

The vision of VVOB contains two broad objectives: **poverty alleviation** by improving education in the South, and **broadening the public support** in Flanders for development cooperation. This means we want to increase people's involvement when striving for a sustainable world with equal opportunities for all.

The first objective is shaped by our education programmes in the South, the second goal through our operations in Flanders, our 'Northern Operations'. However, both are inseparable. Working on broadening public support is linked to what we do in the South: VVOB should be a bridge between both. This means that we aspire fruitful interaction between the educational reality in 'the South' and in Flanders. In other words, we want to stimulate solidary relations between Flanders and the South. This is an efficient way to realise our vision of a sustainable world with equal opportunities for all.

2009 is a year of significant progress in broadening public support, by means of **SchoolLinks** and our **Traineeship Programme**. The following pages go deeper into this.

Next to this, the **external communication** gets due attention in 2009. Through the websites, an external newsletter, debate afternoons, taking part in events,... VVOB takes initiative to involve Flanders more closely in development issues.

VVOB also wishes to stimulate partnerships on the level of higher education and takes first steps towards **structural cooperation opportunities between colleges**.

A final section is our **volunteer operation**. In 2009, VVOB starts with a voluntary translation service. Volunteers translate texts to or from Dutch, Spanish, English or French. The commitment of many volunteers helps overcome the numerous language barriers we face in our programmes.

Wisdom of life

First and foremost, as a teacher you should have an intercultural mind-set. There is no better way to learn this than by going on a traineeship abroad for three months. I have been in touch with so many different cultures and people that I am ready to teach an intercultural class. During my traineeship, I have learned to respect other people and the values one has. I also had time to think about how I see my future. People taught me a lot of wisdom. I learned to be independent, in terms of teaching, as well as on general matters.

For my work as well, this traineeship has an incredible value. A short summary of what I learned:

- *Plan well: I got my assignments for a period of three months and had to see for myself how to realise them.*
- *Independence: I could organise things myself and did not need approval.*
- *Organising an entire workshop. This is much more work than I imagined it to be (e.g. provide accommodation and food, find people to assist me, send invitations, print T-shirts, issue certificates,...).*
- *Developing a course: most of my time went to making two useful courses. And I am really proud of the result.*
- *English language: I can now easily communicate in English, both in writing and speaking.*
- *I have learned that in school, you are a teacher all day long. It is a mission, and we are responsible for the adults of the future.*
- *If you are on a traineeship for three months, you will return as a true team player.*

To conclude I can perhaps also say that I would never be the person I am today without this experience. What is more, I might not have dared to say that I am quite proud of who I am.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

Brecht Martens, student at KHMechelen, trainee at VVOB Zambia



SchoolLinks

The birth
of 14 partnerships

Thousands of kilometres apart, a different language, an unfamiliar culture and an educational environment that is unparalleled,... In a nutshell, this is what the 28 schools that got on the VVOB SchoolLinks programme are faced with. A large dose of curiosity to get to know each other, an open attitude, a passion for education and a belief to establish fruitful exchanges is what they have in common.

All 28 schools get support from the VVOB SchoolLinks programme. We try to be a bridge that links North and South. By making these direct relationships possible, we strive to enhance correct imaging and solidarity between individuals and peoples.

A mix

In late 2008 this programme was officially launched. 2009 is the year in which SchoolLinks takes shape. First, VVOB puts its vision on paper, develops support mechanisms for schools and launches a call to all Flemish schools. Their interest is very high and after a few preliminary steps, VVOB decides to collaborate with 14 Flemish schools. It is a mix of primary and secondary, general, special and technical education, from all over Flanders. A number of them already have a partner school, for others our staff members in the South look for a suitable partner.

Model

By the beginning of the new school year, most schools find a partner school and their link is set in motion. The first, tentative communication between the schools leads to the preparation of joint action plans, in which they give shape to their school link. How the link is put into reality, how frequently they communicate and whom they involve in it, is a choice of the individual schools. They have the freedom to decide which kind of relationship they want and how they will shape it, as long as the philosophy of SchoolLinks is respected. This programme advocates a long-term partnership. The emphasis lays on exchange on educational goals. Simultaneously, the schools engage

themselves to pursue a number of criteria to gradually take the school link to a higher level.

VVOB in turn provides a model in which schools can work together, is ready to give advice and support, helps in the often faltering and challenging communication process and provides funding.

Joining forces

Next to the design of the programme and the cooperation with schools, VVOB also looks to establish partnerships with other actors. We seek to join forces with the "twinning programme" of the Ministry of Education, and we conclude cooperation agreements with Kleur Bekennen, VVSG vzw, Djapo vzw, Studio Globo vzw and Green vzw. We are convinced that SchoolLinks is a model in which many other initiatives can be integrated. Through cooperation we can enhance each other's activities, whilst supporting the schools even better.

► **Much more information on SchoolLinks:**
www.scholenbanden.be/english

Sint-Jozefinstituut Essen visits its partner school in South Africa



November 2009

Our cooperation with a school in Surinam

This school year, we, Goede Lucht, launch a cross-cultural cooperation with the Surinamese school OS Clevia. We specifically choose to cooperate with a school in Surinam, as Dutch is also the official language. This facilitates communication between the two schools.

We chose O.S. Clevia because the profile of the school appealed to us. Simultaneously, they were also interested in our profile. We would like to have a school link with a school in the South so that our students can have contact with other cultures and customs, and we can learn from each other. We also strive for a long-term cooperation. 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 starts with an action plan. Both Goede Lucht and OS Clevia propose a number of activities for the first year. These are then matched, as we pursue the same goals. Monitoring of the action plan and completing the planned actions is not always straightforward. Waiting for a reply from our Surinamese partner

(due to lack of Internet access) or preparing and sending a package, takes more time than we thought. However, now we have weekly e-mail contact with the headmistress.

As an introduction, we compose an identity kit. Each class can make something different: with drawings, photos or a short film. In response we receive their kit. This gives us a first image of the Surinamese life. Anyone can follow up on the growth of the project on our 'Suri-board' (see picture). We also make Christmas presents for our friends, and they are extremely happy with them.

Stereotypes are broken, and not just of the students, even of the teachers... We were surprised that they have resources we did not expect (e.g. a climbing rack on the playground,...). Everyone is thrilled to learn about life 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!

Ilis De Bondt, teacher at Goede Lucht, Anderlecht, Belgium



Traineeship Programme

Flemish students take their first steps in international cooperation

Each year VVOB writes traineeship proposals for students. A majority is aimed at students from the teacher training colleges. During several months they can participate in a VVOB programme or in one of our partner institutions.

Through the traineeship, the student gets a first professional experience. But it is the student's personality that especially gains from it. Self-awareness, social and cultural skills, being independent,... These are competences that can often be of more importance than technical skills. VVOB staff members supervise the student up close. Associates from Belgium and the Netherlands, who are familiar with both worlds, as well as local

staff, accompany them in this new and challenging experience. This allows the student to more easily connect with the local culture and customs.

Together with the VLHORA (the Flemish Colleges Council), VVOB selected seven students for an traineeship abroad in 2008. In 2009, they take on a three to five months traineeship in Cambodia, Vietnam, Kenya, Zambia, Rwanda and Zimbabwe.



Kenya has stolen my heart

It all began in June 2008, when my school, Howest, organised an event to encourage students to go on international traineeships. In September, the hunt for a traineeship was opened. In the end, I turned to VVOB that offered me an ICT training in a developing country. I was immediately excited to do this traineeship and applied for it. After a motivational interview I was admitted.

After much organisation at school and at home, I leave for Nairobi on February 2nd. So here I am, a loner on the other side of the world. But I do not need to be afraid, as VVOB staff members are always ready to help. I work at the Ministry of Education, in the ICT department, where I assist in the project "ICT Integration in Education". This project will improve the ICT infrastructure in the Ministry and will take up organising this in the schools as well. I have a personal sub-project: creating a web portal for the public, so as to distribute messages on education.

The whole project is going very well. After everything is finished, I train - read: give a speed course to - the employees of the Ministry, so they can continue to work on this website in the future.

But of course, you also have the people, their friendliness, their culture... But be aware of overly friendly people, because they usually want something from you ;-). Kenya has stolen my heart and one day I will certainly return, who knows, maybe even permanently.

I would like to encourage those who are reading this: if you have the chance to do an international traineeship in cooperation with VVOB, then stop worrying, just DO IT!

Sammy Deprez, student at Howest, trainee at VVOB Kenya



Nothing is easy

For my traineeship, I live and work in Cambodia for four months. I have a degree of primary school teacher and also did a postgraduate North-South, which was an additional enrichment to my bachelor.

I arrive in Cambodia at the height of the dry season. The heat is unbearable and after five minutes you need shade and water. But even from the very start, Cambodia slowly conquers my heart. We rent a bicycle and explore our environment: Siem Reap, my traineeship placement. It is very touristic, because it is the base for the World Heritage Site Angkor Wat, a tourist attraction in this poor country. Because money flows in the short term, one does not think of sustainable tourism. Hence the concentration of people looking for work and the exploitation of tourists, which results in a strange, negative atmosphere. This is still a traumatised country, influenced by external factors. This is why one does not know what to tackle first! Nevertheless, hopeful and motivated people who really want progress characterise this country.

Thanks to my traineeship, I come into contact with other Khmer. I make small conversations, we laugh together, appreciate and respect each other. These people always make sure dinner or a party is on the programme. In the teacher training of Siem Reap I work with the lecturers of future teachers. We brainstorm and discuss the teaching methods. We work in a kind of model school. Everything that receives a positive reaction, will be carried out to the rest of the country. There are approximately 18 institutes for teacher training; by working with these future teachers, you reach the youth of tomorrow with good teaching methods. This is really a superb concept. I see how knowledge is transmitted through these workshops, and I feel a little proud in the name of VVOB.

A few hours a day, I teach English. Although my English is not first-rate, the "Teacher Trainer English" can use some extra help, and this way, I have more contact with 'our target group'. I get to know the students and I learn what motivates them. I learn to understand why things are the way they are, and above all, that nothing is easy! This gives me a little love, understanding and satisfaction in return, which is fun when you do a traineeship. They involve me in important Buddhist ceremonies and in graduations, both magical moments for sure, and I feel alive and realise what is important. It also gives me useful insights for my work with the lecturers and lesson preparations.

Besides my traineeship, I really enjoy watching the sunset and I get pleasure from the little wonderful things that Cambodia has to offer: the sound of the monk prayers in the background, a water lily on the rice fields, an ox that pulls a cart, an exuberant family party, a karaoke, deterring wild dogs, scorpions in your bedroom, the sound of crickets, day trips with a moped, drinking coffee along the road, eating rice every day, people you get to know and, of course, the smile of a child.

Evelien Lammaing, post-graduate student Development Cooperation at Howest-Katho, trainee at VVOB Cambodia

In 2009, the range of VVOB traineeship opportunities extends significantly. The number of available placements increases from 11 in 2008, to 35 in 2009. We carry out active promotion of the Traineeship Programme through an extensive section on the VVOB website, attractive presentations on paper, direct communication to the colleges through mailings, personal contacts, attendances at information sessions in colleges,...

These efforts pay off, because many people make inquiries about our foreign traineeship possibilities. 26 students have a motivational interview at VVOB in 2009, of which, eventually, 14 will do a traineeship in 2010. These are mostly students from the teacher training colleges, but this year we also have some

university students from the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences.

All students are committed to let their experiences live on after their traineeship. They do so by means of an activity about their traineeship. Thus they contribute to enhance public support for development cooperation in the Flemish society, and to more correct imaging of and an open attitude towards the South.

► **More information on VVOB traineeships (in Dutch):**
<http://www.vvob.be/stages>

VVOB in the 'South'

Forming | Storming | Norming | Performing... (*)

Forming

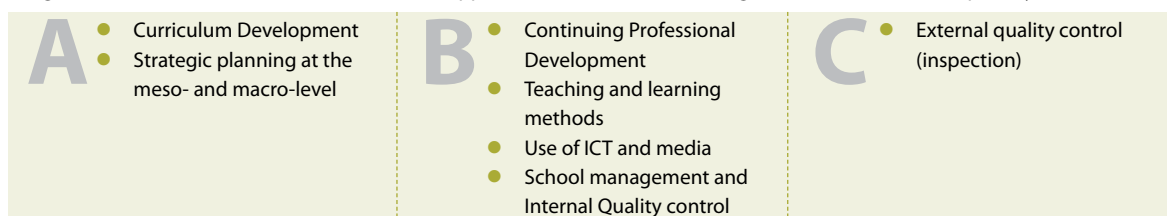
Implementing our high ambitions on programme operations (*forming*), formulated in 2007, proved not to be an easy task in 2008. There were quite some operational challenges. Some examples... Negotiating with fewer partners, but on much larger budgets, that also had to be properly managed... Giving the partner more responsibility means that VVOB had to be more of a facilitator than an executor, but still remains financially responsible towards DGDC as our major donor. Aiming for measurable results at the meso-level (between policy and local level), which eventually also affects the macro-level, without losing touch with what is happening in schools, with teachers and pupils. Building knowledge about our niche in the education sector, starting from our practical experiences. Composing a team in each country that keeps a good balance between local capacity and innovative technical contributions of foreign aid workers. Gradually adapting the internal communication to the growing number of local employees. Seeking opportunities for better integration of the SchoolLinks programme in our existing 'technical' operations.

Storming and norming

2008 can be called the year of *storming*. In a context of uncertainty and dealing with internal tensions, we sought the best possible approaches to the challenges of programme implementation. It is a phase we endured well, because 2009 is the year of *norming*, of being able to determine agreements and to have an ever better understanding of who we are as an organisation within the landscape of education in the South.

Two examples:

- We can increasingly define the themes on which we operate and want to further develop our expertise. We work at the starting point of educational development (A: the goals, the curriculum, the overall strategy), as well as at the finishing point (C: determine whether the goals are achieved). We invest a lot in (B) the support needed to meet those targets, and therefore aim especially at teachers.



- In order to implement successful programmes, we must consider all levels of governance, the micro-, the meso- and macro-levels. VVOB is valued for this integrated approach. But this strength is also our weakness. Whoever succeeds in linking levels, also needs many resources to realise the plans that originate from it. VVOB was too little aware of this before, and was sometimes overly ambitious. VVOB can set up pilot projects with the available resources, but does not have the means at its disposal to also transfer the good results of successful pilot projects nationally.

Performing

Therefore we see it as our task to further link with the capacity of national governments and the plans of other donors. To this end we will better document the successes in our pilot phases and more actively invest in networking and lobbying activities. We see this as a further development of our role as 'facilitator'. Therefore, we make a clearer distinction between what VVOB on the one hand, and the partner on the other, contributes. We are convinced that this is the final step needed to have a programme that is not only well structured, but is also *performing*.

(*) Broad analogy to the model 'Tuckman's Stages' (1965) by Bruce Wayne Tuckman, which focuses on group dynamics.

- ▶▶ *Forming: The phase of design*
- ▶▶ *Storming: The phase of conflict and chaos*
- ▶▶ *Norming: The phase of establishing norms for groups and cooperation*
- ▶▶ *Performing: The phase of efficient and effective cooperation*

Overview 2009

Programmes and projects to be handed over

Ecuador

Multi-Year Programme

- Escuelas Gestoras del Cambio (Schools as Actors of Change)

Project to be handed over

- PLANTELplus

Budget spent in 2009

- € 922 980

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 11
- Expat staff: 6

Website EGC

- www.escuelasgestorasdelcambio.edu.ec

» P. 22

DR Congo

Multi-Year Programme

- Strengthening primary and technical agricultural education

Budget spent in 2009

- € 624 627

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 1
- Expat staff: 3

Website VVOB DR Congo

- www.vvob.be/drc

» P. 20

Zambia

Multi-Year Programme

- CPD (Continuous Professional Development at College and School level)

Budget spent in 2009

- € 1 047 713

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 5
- Expat staff: 6

Blog VVOB Zambia

- <http://vvobzambia.blogspot.com>

» P. 32

Surinam

Multi-Year Programme

- PROGRESS (Programme more Effective Schools Surinam)

Budget spent in 2009

- € 833 318

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 5
- Expat staff: 4

Website PROGRESS

- www.progress-sr.org

» P. 28

Zimbabwe

Multi-Year Programme

- Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme

Budget spent in 2009

- € 595 415

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 10
- Expat staff: 2

Website VVOB Zimbabwe

- www.vvob.co.zw

» P. 34

Belgium

Support of the activities in the partner countries and general organisation

'Northern Operations'

- SchoolLinks
- Traineeship Programme

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- 13

Websites

- www.vvob.be
- www.scholenbanden.be

» P. 9

Vietnam

Multi-Year Programme

- Strengthening lower secondary education
- Participatory agricultural extension programme

Budget spent in 2009

- € 958 074

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 6
- Expat staff: 4

Website VVOB Vietnam

- www.vvob.be/vietnam

» P. 30

Kenya

Multi-Year Programme

- ICT Integration in Education
- *Healthy Learning* in primary schools

Project to be handed over

- Skillslab

Budget spent in 2009

- € 942 709

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 5
- Expat staff: 5

Website VVOB Kenya

- www.vvob.be/kenya

» P. 24

Rwanda

Multi-Year Programme

- Strengthening school management
- Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Project to be handed over

- Skillslab

Budget spent in 2009

- € 828 407

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 13
- Expat staff: 5

» P. 26

Cambodia

Multi-Year Programme

- SEAL (Science and Life Skills in Teacher Training)
- IMAGE (Strengthening Agricultural Extension)

Projects to be handed over

- Strengthening Health Education
- Learner Centred Methodology
- Open Resource Centre

Budget spent in 2009

- € 828 418

Number of associates on 31/12/09

- Local staff: 16
- Expat staff: 6

» P. 18

Cambodia

A year of handing over and picking up speed

2009 was a year of transition for VVOB in Cambodia. Two projects were handed over to our local partners, while the new Multi-Year Programme, consisting of two main components - one in Teacher Training and one in Agricultural Extension - gained momentum.



Wanted: quality in large quantity

Cambodia has made considerable progress in achieving the Education for All targets over the past years. Primary school enrolment rates are high, with a declining gender gap. But on the other hand, many children redo grades, so on average it takes more than 10 years to complete primary school. However, less than half of all students even achieve this. It goes without saying that the situation in secondary schools is even more worrying. That is why the VVOB education programme in Cambodia addresses not so much access to school, but rather focuses on the quality of education. By strengthening the pre-service teacher training centres, VVOB and its partners improve the quality of teaching and increase the relevance of learning for pupils in rural Cambodia.

Fully fledged

As such, the two VVOB projects that were handed over in 2009 to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), met important needs in teacher training. Both the Learner Centred Methodology and the Open Resource Centre projects focused on general teaching methodology for primary education, through professional development of teacher trainers and quality educational resources. These teacher trainers now provide the young teacher trainees with better skills and insights into what it takes to be a good teacher.

Whereas the initial scope of the project targeted only three provinces of Cambodia, all pedagogy teacher trainers throughout Cambodia received training on learner centred methodology. Moreover, digital resources in Khmer language were developed, distributed to all 18 Teacher Training Centres and even put online.

The resource centre at the Provincial Teacher Training Centre of Siem Reap is now housed in a more spacious building, recently built by BTC, the Belgian Development Agency. A good example of how two development partners can complement and reinforce each other.

The sustainability and ownership of VVOB's intervention becomes more apparent as MoEYS is now deploying the pre-service teacher trainer capacity and materials - developed by both VVOB projects - for training to (in-service) teachers in primary schools.

Based on the mid-term evaluation in 2008 of the School Health Promotion project in Battambang province, this third project was scaled down to a more feasible scope within the current context. In 2009 a great deal of the project team's effort went into the development of quality materials in cooperation with teacher trainers and experts. In 2010, the challenge remains to turn this project into a success and strengthen health education in Cambodian Teacher Training Centres.

Taking shape

At the same time, the recently started SEAL programme for pre-service teacher training in Science, Environmental and Agricultural Life skills gained momentum in 2009. Building on the results of the physics project that was handed over to the Cambodian partner in 2008, the pilot stage for lower secondary school level takes place at the Regional Teacher Training Centre of Kandal. It addresses the need to make education more relevant by introducing practical, hands-on approaches to the four science subjects: physics, biology, earth science and chemistry. Teacher trainers learn how to stimulate creative thinking and develop problem solving skills of students. They acquire skills to apply learner centred methodologies, such as low cost experiments and field trips and develop supporting tools and materials in line with the local curriculum.

In 2010 we will also incorporate environmental awareness and agricultural life skills into these four core curriculum subjects.





The focus will therefore shift towards life skills-based approaches for building a responsible attitude and social behaviour with pupils. This is clearly necessary as the spirit of cooperation is still somewhat lacking in Cambodian society in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge genocide.

First results in agricultural extension

The very same concepts lie behind the introduction of 'Participatory Technology Development' methods in the ImAgE (Improving Agricultural Extension) programme, in cooperation with the Provincial Department of Agriculture of Kandal. By showing farmers how to identify and solve problems as a group - rather than individually - extension workers play an important role both as a coaches of farmer groups and as agricultural experts. The food crisis of 2008 has once more highlighted that rural households are at great risk in countries like Cambodia, where 80% of the population depends on farming activities and

one out of three lives below the poverty line. Their vulnerable livelihood is further threatened by environmental degradation. Hence why this second component of the new Multi-Year Programme equally pays attention to the safe use of (organic) pesticides and fertilisers. Although the programme experienced some difficulties in the initial stages, the first results were achieved by the end of 2009. In the three pilot districts of Kandal province, the System of Rice Intensification was successfully introduced by the extension workers leading to a higher yield and lower cost for farmers.

During 2010, the programme will - in cooperation with other donors - continue with the development of technical training materials, such as manuals for organic vegetable and mushroom growing. The inclusion of women and youth as priority target groups remains also high on the agenda in order to address the problem of increased migration of youth to cities.

Challenges

Although a year of transition, or even transformation, VVOB Cambodia can look back on a very rewarding 2009. The new Multi-Year Programme will finally reach full speed in 2010 while the last remaining 'old style' project will be handed over. At the same time, the programme management will develop the second phase (2011-2013) of the Multi-Year Programme, based on the lessons learned of the mid-term evaluation. Plenty of challenges remain; this much is sure!

A bumpy ride but definitely worthwhile!

My name is Jan Geusens. For 8 years I worked as a VVOB associate in Vietnam. Since 2007 I am the programme manager of Cambodia. While I sometimes have nostalgia looking back at my Vietnam period, the last 3 years have probably been the most exiting and rewarding in my life as a development worker.

I vividly remember the circumstances when I arrived in Phnom Penh three years ago. As before there was no programme manager present in Cambodia, I was faced with many challenges, moreover because the projects were already running for a couple of years. On top of that, I arrived at a special time; during the transition from project to programme operations. As VVOB became increasingly professional, the organisation examined and optimised the role of the associates, the relationship with local counterparts, the organisational structure, the management of personnel, as well as the implementation strategies. In 2009 this process runs at full speed and demands a lot of flexibility and efforts from everyone involved.

As I look back at the past 3 years, I realise how much has changed in VVOB Cambodia, all within a short period of time. Associates work closer in team, which integrates well within the structures of the Cambodian institutes. The intervention programme is more coherent and aligned with the priorities of the strategic partner. A closer cooperation with the central departments of the cabinets involved, encourages ownership and sustainability. Together with the most important actors in the education sector in Cambodia (e.g. BTC, UNICEF, JICA and USAID), VVOB brings the capacity of the target groups to a higher level. Hence why VVOB is highly appreciated by the Cambodian and international partners, especially because of the high quality of its contributions.

Although there is still a lot of work to do and new challenges present themselves, I am a satisfied man. It is very rewarding to lead a strong programme team, which indeed can be very proud of its accomplishments. Admittedly, I gained a few more wrinkles during the last years, but it definitely was, and still is, worthwhile!



DR Congo

Difficult, but not impossible!



The expenditure on education in the DR Congo is less than 10% of the national budget. More than 80% of which is employed to finance the meagre wages of the teachers, reducing the investment and operating budgets to almost nothing. Consequently, the entire education system, both in the centre and in the provinces, is deprived of material and financial resources. This undermines the quality of education and the parents' income, as they have to fully finance the cost of schooling their children.

Fortunately, the Ministry of Education recognises this situation and clearly wants to make the necessary changes. This is reflected: in the design of a new law for national education; in the various sector strategies for primary, secondary and vocational education; in the importance of the sector in cooperation agreements; in the will to reform the salaries of teachers; and in the desire to computerise the school system.

The importance of a sound education system as a pillar of progress is also reflected in the presence of many development organisations, including VVOB. Our programme aims to contribute to a better quality of primary and technical agricultural education: by improving the operation of the 'basic cells' in the schools, that serve as an autonomous structure for training teachers; a better management of schools; and by renewing teaching in classrooms.

We would essentially like to realise this in cooperation with the inspectorate, that, through its central and decentralised services, basically reaches all schools in this enormous country, with very limited communication capabilities. There also is an important cooperation with the general management for curriculum and teaching materials, whereby working on the content of agricultural education. At the request of the Congolese government, that wants to avoid bringing development on two speeds (Kinshasa and the donor darling provinces against the other, more inaccessible provinces), VVOB is working on a national scale.

Problems are there to be overcome

2009 was a difficult year for VVOB operations in the DRC. Nevertheless, this has not prevented us to work efficiently with our partners and to deliver results.

The forms of the school inspection service were revised to achieve better follow-up of the headmasters and teachers. Via the distribution of laptops and modems in the 30 provinces, communication in this vast country now goes through the Internet, which is significant progress in a country with no postal service. The cooperation between VVOB and APEFE established a website for the inspection service. All files and training modules will soon be available online throughout the country.

Thanks to the cooperation between the Flemish and Congolese school inspection, the notion of "global schools" was introduced. These are combined inspection visits in schools, that should ensure an increase of the work efficiency of inspectors in the field.

In the school year 2010-2011 the technical agricultural education will be revised, thanks to the efforts of VVOB. From September 2010 onwards, the curricula for these new options will be implemented in the 1250 technical secondary agricultural schools. The competence approach, good general school





management, entrepreneurship and didactic materials were resolutely chosen as focal points in the improvement of the quality of technical agricultural education.

VVOB assisted to the development and distribution of educational and didactic materials and training modules for the 'basic

cells' in the schools, so teachers can train themselves. Several trainings were organised for the pedagogical actors to increase their educational capacity. This capacity building should allow a better framework for education, better management of the schools and improve the educational performance of teachers.

Various departments on formation and control within the school inspection were connected to the Internet and the website of the inspection was thoroughly adjusted with the aim of offering a database. Finally, the SERNAFOR library was renovated, so it can return to its original function.

Challenges in 2010

A big challenge is and remains assessing the reach of our influence and impact on the cascade system within the school inspection in this vast country. We will carefully follow up on our actions and creatively deal with alternative systems, such as working with pilot schools/provinces and carrying out small fact-finding studies to examine our impact. We will also work with school radios to increase the reach of our actions.

A lack of harmonisation of our activities constitutes a major handicap for the impact of our operations in the field. Reality, the large number of primary schools, combined with the limited budget of VVOB, will certainly force us to reflect upon our programme and our flexibility. We will indeed have to look for synergies with other donors.

► Website VVOB DR Congo: www.vvob.be/drc

Activation of the 'basic cells for framework and formation', a big challenge

My name is Michelle and I work in the DR Congo, since September 1st, 2009. Within the VVOB programme, I am responsible for the 'primary education' section. In Belgium I worked for a pupil guidance centre and gave training to teachers.

In Congo, I have my desk at SERNAFOR Primaire, the national service for training of primary school teachers. This service has ramifications into every primary school. At school level, SERNAFOR exists in the form of a 'cell for framework and training'. Teachers, under the guidance of the director, come together to discuss and develop educational materials, to set up lesson plans and evaluate them. This instrument offers many opportunities, but is not operational in many schools.

One of the objectives of the VVOB programme is to revitalise these 'basic cells'. VVOB tries to achieve this by supporting SERNAFOR Primaire in developing training materials. Through a step by step pass on system (cascade system) it should reach the schools. 2009 has shown that this system needs further support. Or...can only work when our Congolese partner sees the educational materials as their product. This motivates me to emphasise that "VVOB supports, and that the Congolese partner takes initiative and applies for VVOB assistance". Perhaps nothing particular, but it gives another dimension to the relationship with the partner. He feels more responsible.

Partners on equal footing is a desired situation, but at the moment this is still elusive. I manage the budget, give boundaries and set priorities. And I share this openly with the partner. Me managing the finances is regarded, by a number of my Congolese colleagues, as a form of oppression... Should I fully be directed by the partner, then perhaps a large part of the budget would serve as an extra income. I understand their concern for an extra income, but I always stress that this is not the responsibility of VVOB. In their eyes, it is easy for me to talk; I have a very generous income by Congolese standards. It is not obvious being productive when the stomach and wallet are nearly empty. A monthly bonus to encourage the work of the 'basic cells' is welcome. The conditions for gaining this premium is in the hands of the partner. Exchanges have preceded. Without a proposal, the budget in 2010 could not provide a bonus. Putting them responsible for matters concerning them, has effect. I presume that this will also simplify the application.

Photo: Michelle (second from the left) with some colleagues of SERNAFOR.



Ecuador

Education is a policy priority



Since the inauguration of the Correa government in January 2007, investments in the social sector are top priority, and education has received the most attention with 55% of the budget (€1621 million). This results in an excellent conjuncture for VVOB's development cooperation. All the more because the aid that is given, mostly contains technical assistance, which, in this case, can count on investments for a proper framework of its cooperation activities.

After decades of neglect, The Ministry of Education arises now like a phoenix from its ashes and reclaims the full leadership of the education sector. However, this process does not unfold without striking a blow here and there as it entails a speedy process of change with a fair amount of major reshuffles, nationally as well as regionally and locally. Even the support that is given to a large part of the local poor population is the cause of much resistance in other parties.

Schools as Actors of Change in full expansion

The programme 'Schools as Actors of Change' (Escuelas Gestoras del Cambio - EGC) aids the Ministry of Education in the realisation of its ten-year plan (2006-2015). Amongst others, it improves the pre-service training and the in-service tutoring of primary education teachers. In addition, the programme helps with the modernisation of the inspection service. A small part is dedicated to practical research to help the education policy to involve parents in the schools. 'Learning' is important in this programme. This process is being recorded with our partners in a series of jointly published publications.

Environmental research as dynamic starting point

The programme kicked off in 2008 with an extensive environmental research in ten selected provinces. The aim was to be able to make a decent choice of schools and to activate the cooperation of all parties involved. This was done by means of a participative research whereby involving the new

interdisciplinary work groups of the board of education in the respective provinces. In 2009 this will be finished.

The research has identified 82 learning communities. They are comprised of 2095 teachers, 56,926 students and 486 schools. 82 of these schools have a specific valuable pedagogical experience (e.g. in the field of environmental education, mathematics and language education, parent involvement,...).

Increased participant involvement

As operations progress in the provinces and on the central level, the partners' involvement grows. The participative approach explains the participants' enthusiasm and the target groups' high expectations. The Ministry has known VVOB for many years and is able to value its technical support. This feeling of mutual trust considerably simplifies and strengthens the existing cooperation.

The 82 selected schools have already been through an intense reflection process. It enables them to strengthen their experiences and to spread them to the surrounding schools. The VVOB team and its colleagues of the Ministry lead the provincial participants.





Challenges for 2010

2010 will bring a greater commitment of technical support on a local level. All schools and communities will be closely involved in different in-service training activities, which will strengthen the process of change through the participants. The target remains to increase the quality of education.

End-phase projects

The project PLANTELplus is situated within the sector of spatial planning. Its main benefactor of support is SENPLADES (the National Secretariat for Planning and Development) and it also has agreements with AME (municipalities) and CONCOPE (provinces). On the one hand, this cooperation focuses on technical support and capacity building of the partners to make democratic and efficient use of the territory; on the other hand, it helps with the draft of a national planning system that should provide more clarity regarding the competences of the three government levels. This project will end in June 2010.

From the central level, courses will be organised to train all teachers and principals. Afterwards, the programme will help them to put their newly acquired knowledge into practise.

The schools will be better organised because of the development of their 'institutional education project'. This project lays out the course the institution will follow in the coming years. Students as well as teachers, principals and parents will cooperate and all students and parents can contribute to environmental actions.

► Website EGC: www.escuelasgestorasdelcambio.edu.ec



Joining forces for a more profound education improvement

I am Mercedes and I work for the National Board of Elementary Education of the Ministry of Education. I am appointed to the post of co-coordinator for the EGC programme. This position interests me greatly because of the many challenges to which we can jointly and creatively find a solution.

The VVOB programme in 2009 entails significant progress in the work with the schools and their transformation into participants of change. The positive changes in behaviour of the members of the different work groups, the inspectors and the principals of the institutions, lie at the basis of a real change within the learning communities. Adults now learn from their children, teachers from the parents and students from other students. These are all components of the education revolution that can be traced back to the culture of the Indians and their 'sumak kawsay', 'life in its full intensity'. This can not happen unless people are willing to work together and with respect for one another.

The new constitution perceives education as a strategy to attain happy cohabitation with a guarantee for participation, equal rights, interculturality and inclusion. This constitutes the dream of our people. We all want a qualitative form of education, aimed at the people and their development as a component in the greater whole, with respect for nature, human rights, democracy, with attention for equal gender rights, justice, solidarity and peace and a place where art, individual and collective initiative, and the development of skills can thrive.

This is all possible and therefore I am determined to work hard, so that the schools can transform to beacons of change.

Dreams become reality when we work together for a better future!



Kenya

Gaining momentum



The year 2009 brings many challenges. The Grand Coalition Government struggles to implement the reforms agreed after the 2008 post-election violence to reunite the country. Coupled with poor global prospects and severe drought in the Horn of Africa, Kenya realises hardly any economic growth and experiences increased poverty.

The education sector still receives the largest (more than 25% and rising) share of the national budget, despite the difficult financial times. In March 2008, the Government introduced Free Day Secondary Education. As expected, the demand for secondary education has grown immensely since the launch of Free Primary Education in 2003. In 2009, the transition rate from primary to secondary education reaches the targeted 70%. A real achievement!

Towards the end of the year, however, the Ministry of Education receives negative publicity. An internal audit unveils that more than € 1 million has not been properly accounted for. Internal and external investigations are launched and several staff members interdicted. Steps are taken to strengthen financial management and to safeguard resources. Fortunately, these matters do not negatively affect the VVOB programme, that controls its own budget through a Financing Agreement with the Ministry of Finance, signed on May 29th 2009.

Integrating ICT in education, a big job

The sub-programme 'ICT Integration in Education' works with all directorates and units of the Ministry of Education. These are represented in the ICT Integration Team. This team, responsible for coordination and harmonisation of all ICT initiatives, gradually matures as the year progresses. Through various learning opportunities, study visits and conferences, its members are now practising what they preach. They give crucial guidance and advice to the senior managers for the development of policies, guidelines and strategic planning.

In May, we launch a training scheme for senior managers who are too busy to enroll in regular classes. Through an individualised programme with personal tutors they learn a variety of ICT skills for improved management. This unusual approach creates a real 'ICT buzz'. At the end of the year, more than 35 people, including the Permanent Secretary and many directors, are scheduling sessions whenever they have a spare moment: be it at 7 a.m., after 5 p.m. or during the weekend. A definite success formula!

In 2009, our priority is on enhanced communication, information sharing and dissemination at the ministerial headquarters. This happens mainly through wider adoption of e-mail and intranet, and a redesigned website. The focus in 2010 shall be on strengthening information sharing and access between the headquarters of the Ministry, the districts and the general public.

Effective ICT integration in the classroom

The biggest challenge is integrating ICT in teaching and learning in class. Teachers require attitude change and new didactic skills. The agency mandated for the in-service training of mathematics and sciences teachers, embraces ICT to improve its programme. They develop an institutional ICT policy and include ICT integration in their strategic plan. More than 60 teachers enroll in various technical training programmes. But the real 'aha!'-insight comes during a workshop with an education expert from the

University of Ghent. They now realise how a teacher can be empowered by ICT.

Healthy Learning

The Healthy Learning programme focuses on introducing elementary insights and skills on hygiene, nutrition and a healthy environment and to make learning practical and more relevant.

VVOB works closely with the staff of the Ministry of Education and several other stakeholders, such as the World Food Programme, as well as with education officers and officers from other Ministries (water, health, agriculture ...) in the districts. But the ultimate beneficiaries are the primary school children.

VVOB provides advice, technical input, funding for primary school projects and capacity strengthening activities on a national, district and school level.

'Healthy Learning' kicks off in 25 'model schools' in eight arid and semi-arid districts. They start their own projects to improve the health of the pupils. The teachers use a variety of magazines and other didactic materials provided by the programme.

It is encouraging to see parents, teachers and students collectively and actively involved in all steps of the project, offering support and taking ownership. People involved in Healthy Learning report positive change in their lives. Parents and school communities adopt some of the farming techniques taught at school and use them at home. The programme uses the existing curriculum, management systems and mechanisms. As is the case for all Free Primary Education funds, the Healthy Learning funds are sent directly to the schools who account for their use through financial returns. District officers visit the schools every quarter to monitor progress and to give advice and support.

Throughout the year, many of the lessons learned at schools and in the districts are shared at national and international forums.



In 2010 we will engage five new schools, and focus on district and national multi-sector coordination. We plan to 'translate' local experiences into a training package for teachers and school managers. The year will be full of activity!

Twenty years support to the medical sector concluded

The National Skillslab Expansion project with focus on improved practical skills for nurses and clinical officers ('assistant doctors') caps the long partnership with the Ministry of Public Health. The trainees now develop their practical skills before they meet the real patients, by using dummies or manikins and 'simulated patients'.

All colleges of the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTTC), countrywide, use the skillslab manuals and learning guides. The exam systems are harmonised and a platform for e-learning is available. We hope that KMTTC will continue to support innovation of medical education.

► Website VVOB Kenya: www.vvob.be/kenya

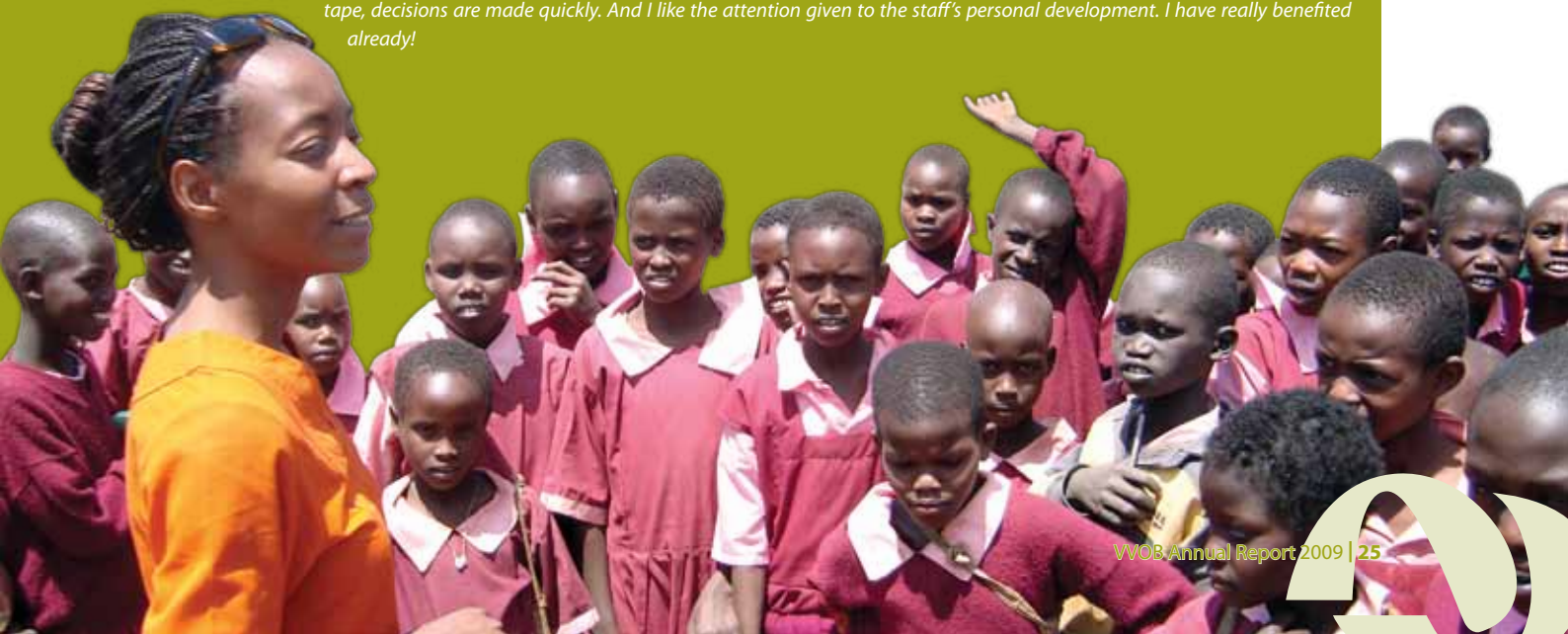
They continue to be committed and try again to succeed

I am Rachael Ameyo Were, Healthy Learning Officer. I have been with VVOB for one year and two months now. Since I joined, I have worked with people at three levels: with staff from the Ministry of Education headquarters, which is the 'macro'- or policy level, with district officers, which is the 'meso'-level and with teachers and parents from primary schools, the so-called 'grassroots' level. Regular interaction between all these people is really an exciting feature of the Healthy Learning programme, that promotes learning about health, water and sanitation, environment, agriculture and many other issues that affect our lives. We create opportunities for pupils and communities involved in the school to grow up healthily and be a productive member of society. Each group has something to offer and is taken into account at the other levels. This way, we look at what we do from many different perspectives.

It is very motivating when I see, for example, a member of a school committee explaining very animatedly about the school's achievements, whatever these are: offering more nutritious lunches with vegetables from the school garden, introducing hand washing cans, rearing chickens for additional income, painting a health message on a wall... This stimulates the programme from 'the-bottom-up'. And it is even more encouraging, that even in times of adversity, like the severe drought of 2009 which made most of the crops in the school gardens fail, pupils, teachers and parents do not give up. They continue to be committed and try again to succeed.

Personally, I have developed a lot in the past year, since I work with so many different - and motivated - people. I am convinced that what we do makes a difference. The programme is challenging me to become more multi-disciplinary and to learn about areas that are rather beyond my area of specialisation in social sciences and international relations.

The beauty of VVOB as an agency is its 'smallness'. As an individual you can make a noticeable contribution. There is very little red tape, decisions are made quickly. And I like the attention given to the staff's personal development. I have really benefited already!



Rwanda

Improving education in the city and on the countryside



In recent years, Rwanda is undergoing major political and economic changes. The state is being strengthened and all figures point to economic growth. However, this growth does not expand proportionally for rich and poor, in the city and on the countryside. 70% of the population remains dependent on agriculture and due to the population growth in recent years, the pressure on agricultural land increases. Next to this, youth unemployment jumps out as a pressing social problem. Through the School Management and TVET programme (Technical and Vocational Education and Training), VVOB and its partners hope to improve the quality of education in the cities, but especially in rural areas.

VVOB School Management leads to uniform financial reporting in all schools in the country

2009 is a crucial year for the VVOB School Management programme in Rwanda, executed in close collaboration with the Rwandan Ministry of Education (Mineduc). Regardless of the major educational changes in 2008 and 2009, which brought enormous challenges to nearly every school in Rwanda, the Ministry continues to clearly focus on good school management. The Ministry also defines this unambiguously as a priority in its strategic and action plan.

In 2009 they raised the compulsory six years to nine years of free primary education. This entails a major reform of both the primary and the entire secondary education. Moreover, the language of teaching in schools changes from French to English. It is an immense task, and is not simply implemented in the short term. This intervention already meets a variety of difficulties.

The School Management Expertise Centre, located in the heart of the Ministry of Education, is actively being visited by schools. It assists them with advice and teaching materials. The Centre also takes part in weekly and monthly meetings with Mineduc and the partners. Moreover, it has an education database that is very valuable for the Ministry of Education. This increasingly makes it an important reference in the country and is now well embedded in the Teacher Service Commission, the national pedagogic service for teachers. A whole series of official documents such as the ESPS (Education Sector Policy and Strategy 2009), ESSP (Educational Sector Strategic Plan), SCR (Country Status Report of the World Bank) and official publications of the Belgian Embassy, refer to School Management as 'best practice in the country'. Thus VVOB is leading in the education sector in Rwanda.

Throughout 2009, training courses on school management and ICT are held for all head teachers in the country. 635 directors, 578 accountants and 440 management secretaries are being trained. Thanks to this comprehensive national training, there now is a standardised financial reporting for all secondary schools. The 30 School Management pilot schools (one per district) take up their management functions as true role models. Since the beginning of the programme, most of them participated in the elaboration of strategies on good school management. In 2009 they start with a peer-learning system,

whereby knowledge is shared with colleagues in other schools. This means that they visit each other and exchange tips about good management practices. Consequently, they attempt to integrate these within the reality of their own school. These impressive results are achieved with both VVOB funding and substantial financial support from the Capacity Building Fund of Mineduc itself, that reimburses the costs for accommodation, food and transportation for participants of all School Management courses.

The big challenge for the coming years is to institutionalise the accumulated expertise within Mineduc, so the work of VVOB finds sustainable embedding within this Ministry.

TVET: Technical and vocational education in the fight against youth unemployment

For the Rwandan government Technical and Vocational Education is a priority in poverty reduction. A national Workforce Development Authority (WDA), established in 2008, gets a clear outline in 2009 through the development of a strategic plan for 2010-2013. In 2009, the WDA is not yet fully operational, mainly due to a lack of experts and clear management. The TVET stakeholders take knowledge of this strategy by means of a seminar, although the implementation is still far from reality.

Decentralisation of the TVET policy translates into the development of provincial 'Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres' (IPRC) of which the IPRC in the Southern province (IPRC South) will function as a pilot institute. VVOB advises this institute. A study that maps the current state of the various centres (public and private) in the Southern province shows a lack of: uniform curricula, significant licenses, well-equipped workshops, traineeship opportunities, connection with the labour market, and opportunities to participate in the economic process because of insufficient investment capital... There is a minimal attention to vulnerable groups and it is also a general trend that the students are being taught through lectures, while they should be taught skills in practice rooms. These issues indicate that a wide range of interventions is required. To correct this situation VVOB organises, in cooperation with BTC and SYNTRA Flanders, an educational training on active methodology, as well as technical trainings in electricity, plumbing, home economics, construction, auto mechanics, and mechanics. Both training sessions are connected with each other. In several pilot centres, including the training institute Kavumu, that for years has been a partner



of VVOB, curricula have been adapted in order to organise more practical lessons, much to the contentment of teaching staff and students. At the end of the workshops, all participating schools and training centres for technical education receive a kit with basic materials to match the learned skills to the teaching practice.

Rwanda has a lot of prospects in the tourism sector. To adapt to this trend, the Tourism and Hotel Management curriculum, A2 level, is being elaborated. Function profiles, as well as different

modules, are being developed. The teachers affiliated with schools that offer these studies, take a training, which afterwards is also available as a video documentary.

In 2009, the joint Belgian programme of APEFE, BTC and VVOB was formulated for more than € 7.5 million. There is no doubt that this harmonised intervention will definitely bring value to the support of the TVET reform in Rwanda. The three partners will be able to further develop their expertise, but moreover, this intense cooperation will constitute a fundamental building block for the reform of vocational education in Rwanda.

Remarkable positive changes

My name is Damien Sebanwma Mberabagabo, and I am the director of the Gisenyi's Science School. Since 2003, my school participates in the VVOB School Management programme. After a test, and thanks to the fact that I was found qualified without having any experience in the pursuance of this function, I was recruited to become the director of my school. That is why my performances were purely experimental before I met VVOB. Afterwards, the positive changes were remarkable.

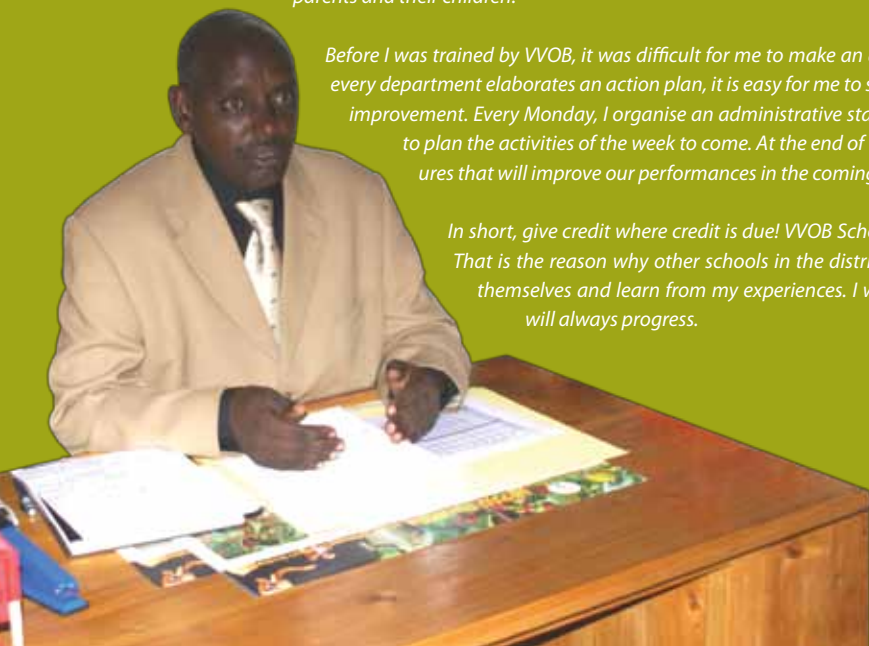
Before, my school was administered under 'commanding' management. Finances were managed individually. Today, the school's management is divided and clear. The expenses are defined by the strategic plan and the annual budget. These are formulated by the stakeholders of the school, among whom are representatives of teachers, parents and students.

Previously, I visited the classes to catch the teachers on irregularities. Today, I visit them to give advice, sometimes in team, in order to mutualise the competences. Before I also made little of the motivation of the teachers. Nowadays, teachers who have worked well are rewarded after the analysis of the school results at the end of the year. The students who have the best results and who are the most implicated socially are also rewarded.

Before the VVOB School Management programme, I depended on the Ministry of Education for everything. I thought that, as a public school, projects to develop the school needed to be designed and executed by the Ministry. Today, I create these projects myself and I look for sponsors. I also sensitise parents to finance certain school projects, because even though the school is public, it is in the benefit of both the parents and their children.

Before I was trained by VVOB, it was difficult for me to make an adequate follow-up of what happens at school. Now that every department elaborates an action plan, it is easy for me to supervise and to give advice, in order to have a progressive improvement. Every Monday, I organise an administrative staff meeting to evaluate the work of the previous week and to plan the activities of the week to come. At the end of the school year, we evaluate ourselves to determine measures that will improve our performances in the coming year.

In short, give credit where credit is due! VVOB School Management has changed many things in my school. That is the reason why other schools in the district make a study trip to our school to see the changes for themselves and learn from my experiences. I will always respect the directives and I am sure my school will always progress.



Surinam

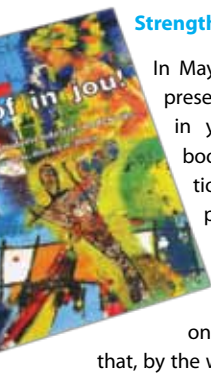
PROGRESS believes in you!



For some years now, educational reform has been an important, if not the most important, theme in Surinamese education. In 2009 this was also the case. Through the Programme more Effective Schools Surinam (PROGRESS), VVOB wants to contribute to this reform process. Within PROGRESS, the Ministry of Education and Community Development (MINOV), the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (PLOS) and VVOB combine forces.

From a view on the general education process, PROGRESS wants to contribute substantially to the educational reforms. The objectives of the programme have four spearheads: (1) Strengthening the departments of the Ministry; (2) strengthening the teacher training institutes; (3) guaranteeing sustainable professionalisation of teachers, lecturers and civil servants; and (4) continuing the development of an education information system that serves to support the policy makers.

Strengthening MINOV departments



In May 2009, we, together with our partners, present the book 'Ik geloof in jou!' (I believe in you!) to the Surinamese society. This book is the result of a successful cooperation between UNICEF, MINOV and VVOB. It presents an inspiring image of what Surinamese education might look like in the future. This gives us an ideal purpose of the educational reforms we are working on. Call it a vision book, if you will. A book that, by the way, also serves as a source of inspiration and guideline for the entire programme.

The book is distributed to everyone working in the Surinamese education sector: teachers, employees of MINOV and employees of educational NGOs. The launch of the book goes hand in hand with an introductory workshop with ideas on how it can be used. The workshop is directed at the entire teaching staff of MINOV. At the same time, this is the first form of reform and professionalisation within the education sector.

Furthermore, the departments of Counseling, Inspection, and Research and Planning of MINOV are provided with basic ICT facilities (computers, printer, laptop, copy machine). Based on the book, plans are being drafted that have to lead to a vision and mission for these departments. In cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, that implements the 'Basic Education Improvement Project' to introduce 11 years of basic education, we furnish a training room.

Reform of the training for teachers of basic education

Within this component there were a lot of brainstorming activities in 2009. The directors of the teacher training institutes meet every three weeks. They work out a realistic scenario for reforming the teacher training. In 2010, they will carefully put the first steps in this growth process. This takes place in cooperation with two Flemish Colleges (the University College Arteveldehogeschool Ghent and the Limburg Catholic University College). They help us realise activities on specific themes,

such as internal quality control, the drafting of a curriculum and formative testing to give students feedback to adjust their study attitude.

Establishing an institute for in-service training and professionalisation

The 'knowledge' within the education sector is quite outdated. Establishing an in-service training institute with the aim to increase the quality of education and keeping it on high standards, offers a possible solution. Through trainings and school coaching activities, we work on the professional development of teachers, schools and the staff of MINOV.

In 2009, the in-service training for teachers starts with the development of two training packages ('Powerful educational environment' and 'Activating didactics') in cooperation with 'PCOS', a Surinamese educational NGO. These are part of the growth model to establish a permanent institute for in-service training. Together with the University College Arteveldehogeschool we are working out professional profiles. They constitute a guideline to set up the courses of the in-service training. Through the 'Ik geloof in jou!'- trainings, we gain experience with local trainers and with organising workshops for the entire educational field in the country.

From an education information system to an education management system

In continuation of a previous VVOB project, this component is already well-integrated in the department of Research and Planning of MINOV. In the past years the department took significant steps in collecting and processing the basic data of pupils, teachers and schools in primary education.

This resulted in the current 'Education Information System', that yet contains insufficient data to effectively and efficiently support educational planning, monitoring and evaluation. It is necessary to gradually expand and upgrade the system; thus over time, expand to a fully fledged 'Education Management Information System'. Due to this, in 2009, the collection of data (e.g. number of students, repeaters, drop-outs, teachers,



man-woman ratios) is expanded to all schools from kindergarten to pre-university education. Because the department wants to grow, we organise a thorough review of the current system. This way we can specify what a new system should include and how this should take place. The review provides a basis for a realistic planning for the upcoming years, which is supported by the department of Research and Planning and the policy of MINOV.

Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)

An important step for PROGRESS is the establishment of the PCU in July 2009. The PCU sees to it that the specific programme objectives are realised and constitutes an official link between VVOB and the programme partners, MINOV and PLOS. The PCU monitors the various components of the programme and tackles the bottlenecks.

Challenges in 2010

The national elections will take place in May 2010. As from the beginning of 2010, important decisions will be postponed until after the elections. The results of the election may strongly influence the policy and priorities in the second half of the year. When continuing PROGRESS, this will have to be taken into account.

PROGRESS is not the only educational reform programme. Hence it is necessary to better present PROGRESS in society and towards the employees of MINOV, the schools and NGOs.

2010 will be the year in which VVOB will contribute to the further growth and development of Surinamese education.

► Website PROGRESS: www.progress-sr.org

We remain enthusiastic!

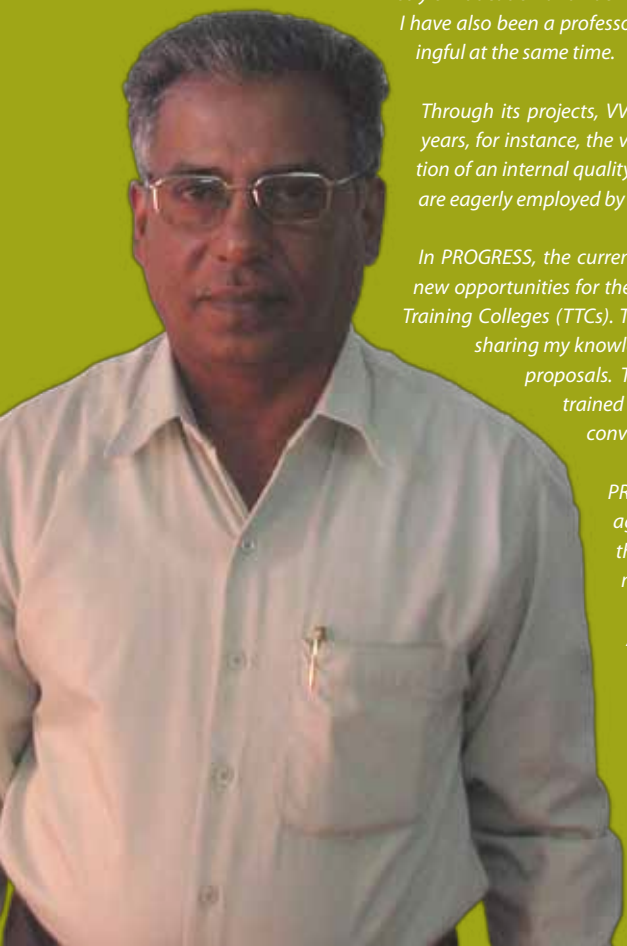
My name is Satin Soekhoe. Since February 1st, 1998, I am Head of Department of the Inspection Higher Secondary Education (VOS) of the Ministry of Education and Public development. Before that, I worked in the Department of Counseling of the Ministry. I have also been a professor, instructor and teacher. The position of Chief Inspector is nerve-racking and meaningful at the same time.

Through its projects, VVOB makes a welcome contribution to the educational sector in Surinam. In recent years, for instance, the vocational training at the Biotechnical Institute received support for the implementation of an internal quality care system. As a result, qualified young people now graduate from the Institute and are eagerly employed by the private and public sector.

In PROGRESS, the current programme, the component 'Reform of the Teacher Training Colleges' will create new opportunities for the educational sector. In 2009, I provided PROGRESS with specific data on the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). This data was used to prepare a policy document about reforming the TTCs. Besides sharing my knowledge and experience, I also contributed to this document by putting forward concrete proposals. The reform should lead to more efficient education in the schools, through better trained teachers. All of this is a very complex matter, and therefore a great challenge! I am convinced that it will succeed.

PROGRESS is also working to reinforce the inspection and other services. A few years ago, inspectors were trained in school screening. This was done in cooperation with the Flemish Inspection Department. I am one of the trained inspectors and I gratefully make use of the knowledge gained during my inspection visits in schools.

A bottleneck in the functioning of the educational inspection system in Surinam is under-staffing. This means that the work of the inspection is not always being done full justice. With a full occupation, optimal will and commitment of all participating stakeholders, and VVOB efforts, we can do much more for the Surinamese education sector. We remain enthusiastic!



Vietnam

Financial and tropical storms

In 2009, the impact of the global financial crisis was felt all over the world. Although the direct effects on Vietnam were rather insignificant, the country was affected by the relaps of foreign investment, decreased remittance inflow and labour emigration, less export and lower export prices. The educational sector experienced a slight decrease of public and private funding. In the agricultural sector, prices for cash crops declined, with less income as a result, but in general not causing unemployment.

The H1N1 pandemic affected some 10 000 cases in Vietnam, of which more than 50 were fatal. The spread of the virus is still increasing and the World Health Organisation expects more people with serious complications of which some will die.

In October and November several storms hit the coast of Central and South Vietnam. After Ketsana, in the beginning of October, and Parma later that month, a third typhoon, Mirinae, struck in the beginning of November. Together they caused over 300 fatalities and Ketsana alone was estimated to have caused about € 620 million in damages, Mirinae another € 250 million, destroying the livelihood of tens of thousands of farmers and fishermen and leaving thousands of people homeless.

VVOB is involved in the educational and agricultural sector in Vietnam. These are extremely important in poverty reduction, and the Vietnamese government is very much aware of this. These sectors receive a lot of attention in policy documents (e.g. the Strategic Economic Development Plan (2005-2010, 2010-2015), the National Programme for a New Rural Development Model (2010-2020) and the Education Development Strategic Plan (2011-2020).



Improvement of the quality of Lower Secondary Education

In education, VVOB focuses on the improvement of the quality of Lower Secondary Education (LSE) in five provinces in North and Central Vietnam. We support innovative teaching methodologies (Active Teaching and Learning) and use Environmental Education (EE) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as entry points.

The main strategy of our education programme 2008-2010 is capacity building. For this, the teacher training is a target of our intervention. We train teacher trainers in the pre-service

and in-service. However, teachers are unlikely to change their teaching as a consequence of training only; they also need to feel the support and encouragement of the educational managers and the community. That is why we focus on educational managers and Mass Organisations. The latter are considered important actors in education by the Vietnamese government and their involvement is part of the envisioned socialisation of education.

The Vietnamese educational system is, as in many Asian countries, focused on knowledge transfer and is teacher-centred. The government wants to change this and stresses innovative teaching methodologies, student-centred teaching and skill transfer. Innovative teaching methodologies and a more learner-centred approach are also part of the movement 2008-2013 on Child Friendly Schools, Active Students. This movement receives a boost in 2009 when the Ministry of Education and Training and the Women's Union and Youth Union agree to join efforts. Our strains to build capacity in the Women's Union to support the link between community and school fits very well into this joint effort.

Top-down and bottom-up

The agricultural extension system follows a typical top-down approach. VVOB supports the use of participatory approaches to come to a more effective agricultural extension system, based on farmers' needs. The programme runs in five provinces in South Vietnam. Part of the effort is to enhance the capacity of agricultural extension workers and Farmers' Clubs. These clubs can be an entry point for the agricultural extension services to collect and disseminate information. An evaluation this year, of





six older clubs, indicates that farmers are indeed becoming more empowered to voice their problems in club meetings. Another achievement relates to the experiments farmers have identified and set-up themselves and through which farmers and extension workers jointly learn about ways to improve farming practices. The uptake of participatory methods by extension workers varies, but in some provinces, the shift towards a more farmers' needs-based approach is already very clear.

A new decree is in the making that is more oriented on farmers than on producers. This increases the importance of farmers in production and extension. In addition, the decree encourages pro-activeness of farmers and capacity building for extension workers, which are also the current objectives of the VVOB programme.

► Website VVOB Vietnam: www.vvob.be/vietnam

Information and Communication Technology for Active Teaching and Learning in Teacher Training Institutes: a personal experience

My name is Nguyen Thi Thu Nguyet. I am a first-year student in the major Literature-Geography. I study Psychology with Mr. Bang and Geography with Mr. Phu (1).

In our class, teachers and students recently use a mini laptop and projector for teaching and learning. We are also trained in the use of several tools - Digital Mind Mapping (2) for example -and how to apply these in teaching and learning. In the Geography and Psychology classes, my teachers bring a mini laptop along and we have the chance to develop Digital Mind Maps on topics related to our study, sometimes with the entire class, sometimes in smaller groups or individually. I think Mind Mapping is a valuable tool to activate our thinking and creativity. It helps to easily move, delete and edit ideas.

The integration of ICT is very useful for my current study, especially in writing my thesis. When I am a teacher myself, I will try to apply what I have learnt about ICT in my future classroom.



- (1) VVOB supported different Teacher Training Institutes with a package of equipment and tools which teacher trainers can use for teaching practice. Mr. Bang and Mr. Phu are members of VVOB's ICT Core group and were trained on the use of different ICTs to activate the learner.
- (2) Digital Mind Mapping is very popular amongst teachers, as well as learners. Mind maps are used to generate, visualise, structure, and classify ideas, and assist in study, organisation, problem solving, decision making, and writing. As a member of VVOB's research group, Mr. Bang assessed the impact of the tools on students' learning outcomes. His findings were presented at a recent UNESCO international conference on 'ICT Transforming Education'.



Zambia

Improving quality in basic education



In 2009 the 'Teacher Training Support Programme' came at full speed. VVOB runs this programme together with the Ministry of Education. Its main purpose is to improve teacher training for basic school teachers (grade 1 till 9). VVOB works with every Teacher Training College for Basic Education, the National In-Service Teachers' College (NISTCOL) and ZAMISE to strengthen Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within the colleges. To improve School-Based CPD, VVOB cooperates with the Educational Support Teams at provincial and district levels in three provinces. The programme gives possibilities to students in Flanders to do a traineeship in Zambia. It also promotes school partnerships between Zambian schools and schools in Flanders.

CPD at college level

VVOB works directly with the national CPD task team to strengthen CPD at college level. The CPD task team, with representation of the colleges, University of Zambia (UNZA), NISTCOL and the Ministry, meets regularly to learn with and from each other and to lead the change in the colleges. A Teaching and Learning (T&L) policy is developed to describe the desired quality of teaching and learning in the colleges. All colleges develop an action plan for improvement after a self-evaluation and a coaching visit. Some common topics in the action plans include development of T&L materials and methods and effective use of ICT. In 2010, VVOB will continue to support the action plans and develop a sustainable system to strengthen the competences of lecturers important for college-based CPD (e.g. collaborative learning, coaching, action research).

ICT to enhance communication and improve teaching and learning

End 2009 a basic ICT infrastructure is in place in all colleges. VVOB supports this by offering basic training and investments in the form of computers, laptops, beamers and camcorders. They all have Internet connectivity, which enhances the communication between VVOB and the colleges, and between lecturers from different colleges. VVOB also supports the implementation of ICT proposals to improve the sustainability of the ICT infrastructure. Many colleges ask for training on the International

Computer Driving License (ICDL). In total 28 lecturers from seven colleges enroll in this training. After a one-day on-site introduction session, participants go through the learning manuals and software at their own pace. In 2010, further support will be given via a boot camp organised at NISTCOL. VVOB will also focus more on the effective use of ICT in education by building capacity within the colleges to use Open Educational Resources (OER) and web 2.0 tools.

Grassroots Zambia

To enhance experimental use of ICT for classroom purposes, VVOB launches a new initiative in 2009, called 'Grassroots Zambia'. Lecturers and teachers from schools are asked to submit an innovative ICT proposal. In total 25 proposals are selected, which can be divided into five groups:

- Find, search and collaborate
- Audio, visual and video learning
- Gadgets and tools
- Language and mathematics
- Hands-on IT

End 2009, all projects are well on their way. Some will be showcased at the eLearning Africa Conference in Zambia in May 2010. Good practices will be disseminated by means of a seminar and publication (see also <http://grassrootszambia.webs.com>).





Distance education

To improve teacher training programmes offered by distance, VVOB builds capacity at college and Ministry level. At Ministerial level, VVOB supports the drafting of quality guidelines for Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL). At college level, a group of ten delegates take part in an international conference in Ghana to learn more about distance education. The distance education coordinators agree on support priorities. As a first step, 60 module writers of colleges are trained in module writing for distance students, using Open Educational Resources in collaboration with TESSA (www.tessafrika.net). In 2010 the programme will focus on sensitisation in ODEL, advanced module writing, learner support at district level and innovative pilots in portfolio development and mobile learning.

School-based CPD in regular and community schools

VVOB supports school-based CPD to improve the teaching skills of teachers already in school, using existing structures (the Teacher Resource Centres). There are two popular

methodologies to strengthen CPD for teachers: the INSET cycle, which is based on identified needs, and the lesson study approach where a teacher gives a demonstration lesson while being observed by peers. Afterwards, they discuss the lesson and suggest how it could be improved. In 2009, VVOB supports more than 600 INSET training activities and the basic facilities of some Teacher Resource Centres are improved by distributing books, computers and printers.

The programme gives specific attention to community schools. In 2009, steady progress is made to implement CPD in Community Schools. In Central Province, VVOB supports orientation workshops on the lesson study approach for about 450 teachers in 120 Community Schools. In the Northern Province a training package is developed on twelve Teaching Skills. Numerous schools receive library books, computers and printers and their staff are trained in basic computer skills.

▶ **Blog of VVOB Zambia:**
<http://vvozb Zambia.blogspot.com>

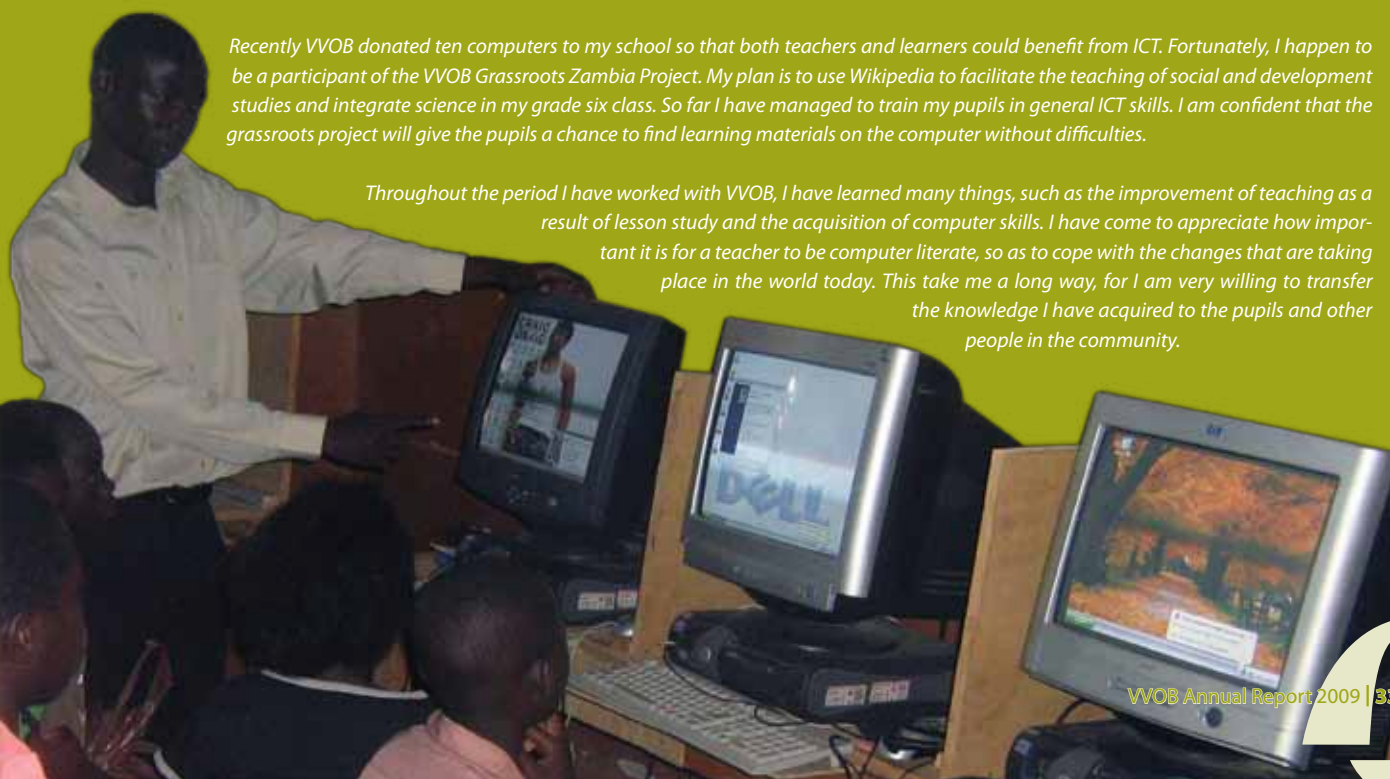
A learning experience

My name is Kunda Kasote. I am a volunteer teacher at Makululu Community Basic School in Kabwe. I started working as an untrained teacher. With the support of the community and the school, I followed formal primary teacher training.

I also learn from the Lesson Study Cycle programme that is introduced by VVOB. I attend a workshop for community school teachers on how to prepare a good lesson plan and how to deliver it. After the training workshop, and with the help of other teachers, I implement the lesson study cycle at school level. It definitely improves my lessons.

Recently VVOB donated ten computers to my school so that both teachers and learners could benefit from ICT. Fortunately, I happen to be a participant of the VVOB Grassroots Zambia Project. My plan is to use Wikipedia to facilitate the teaching of social and development studies and integrate science in my grade six class. So far I have managed to train my pupils in general ICT skills. I am confident that the grassroots project will give the pupils a chance to find learning materials on the computer without difficulties.

Throughout the period I have worked with VVOB, I have learned many things, such as the improvement of teaching as a result of lesson study and the acquisition of computer skills. I have come to appreciate how important it is for a teacher to be computer literate, so as to cope with the changes that are taking place in the world today. This take me a long way, for I am very willing to transfer the knowledge I have acquired to the pupils and other people in the community.



Zimbabwe

A sigh of relief



The beginning of 2009 sees a continued deterioration of the socio-economic environment of Zimbabwe. The situation is critical for schools and teacher education colleges. The start of the academic year is delayed and fewer student teachers enrol than in previous years. By March, the entire country has adjusted to the temporary burial of the Zimbabwean Dollar - with an audible sigh of relief.

Quality Education and Vulnerability

The VVOB programme supports Teacher Education in Zimbabwe, in view of increasing the well-being and development of vulnerable children in the classroom. Vulnerability has many faces in Zimbabwe. Children are made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which affects their family life in many ways. Poverty makes it difficult for people to make ends meet, and this affects the children too. Going to school, and actually learning something, is not obvious under such circumstances. Children with learning difficulties or a disability often do not have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Early childhood development is generally not considered important. Violence against girls as well as boys in school is becoming a major concern. Environmental issues, such as climate change, waste management, water and sanitation (or the lack of it) put a mortgage on the future of Zimbabwe's children.

Teachers, lecturers and student teachers are not spared either. They also face challenges in their day-to-day lives. How do you deal with your own vulnerability as a teacher? And how do you deal with the many faces of vulnerability that you are confronted with in your classroom?

What we stand for - how we work

Every process is approached from the bottom-up, involving the partners from the very beginning and helping them to stay focused on what they wish to achieve. A VVOB team of mainly Zimbabwean advisors helps to facilitate processes of change and capacity building. This team aims to go beyond knowledge and skills, towards changed attitudes, visions and mindsets. At all times, the team seeks to hand over processes to partners, provided they are ready to take over. The programme uses a low-cost approach, which helps to make activities achievable in the resource-strapped classroom environment and ensures that people participate in the programme for the right reasons; not because they gain from it financially. The programme sees learning as essential in bringing about change.

2009

In close cooperation with SNV and PLAN International, two international development organisations, the programme works with the managers of the teacher education colleges. They reflect on their role in making the college environment more responsive to issues of vulnerability and on the academic implications of a rising number of vulnerable children in the classrooms.

The colleges and VVOB organise staff development activities that focus on environmental education, learning differences and attitude choices, training in facilitation and programme making, cholera prevention and hygiene awareness, basic counselling skills and staff development on early childhood development. In total, about 1000 lecturers take part and over half of them are involved in staff development initiatives of their own college.

Despite the slow start of programme activities in 2009, colleges organise life skills-based workshops for over 7000 student teachers. These participatory workshops work on issues of life skills, positive living and nutrition, moving on, stigma and discrimination, gender and HIV/AIDS, cholera prevention and hygiene awareness,... More and more lecturers gain confidence in facilitation and the development of training programmes and workshops, and manage to organise such workshops with their local teams, whilst VVOB team members remain in the background.

Some colleges reach out to the wider communities. For example, they include parents and school communities on issues of early childhood development, cooperate with vocational training centres and organise Candle Light memorial services, commemorating those that have passed away with AIDS.

Thanks to funding received from UNICEF, training for in-service teachers and school communities on cholera prevention and hygiene promotion is possible. This participatory training with a focus on experiences and existing practices of communities and teachers, and on alternative teaching methodologies, reaches out to nearly 7000 teachers and parents. Marymount teachers' college trains over 350 teaching practice mentors in neighbouring schools on the vulnerability of students and pupils.

All the colleges have an operational Monitoring and Evaluation system that has built in reflection and learning moments, putting their own practices, achievements and work at the centre. In 2009 we put special emphasis on building the facilitation skills of our staff and partners. Several research initiatives are undertaken, papers written and articles published in journals. VVOB Zimbabwe also develops a local website, www.vvob.co.zw, on which, next to news articles and training scenarios, a number of toolkits are made available. Partnerships with PLAN International, SNV, IDRC and the Outcome Mapping community, Volens, UNICEF and Save the Children UK strengthen the programme.



2010

There are several newer initiatives, especially related to staff development and in-service training of teachers, where VVOB support will be crucial in 2010. These include staff development initiatives related to Learning Differences and Attitude Choices, Basic Counselling and Environmental Education.

Quite a number of teacher education colleges want to follow the example of Marymount Teachers' College and wish to support teaching practice mentors. There may also be an opportunity to get involved in in-service training of teachers on learning differences and learning difficulties, life skills and child abuse.

Following experiences of 2009 with regard to early childhood development, VVOB will organise a platform for the Departments of Early Childhood Development, where they can jointly explore ways of integrating practical elements into the lectures.

2010 will also be the year in which dialogue will take place with the partners of the programme, in preparing for the second phase of the Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme.

► Website VVOB Zimbabwe: www.vvob.co.zw

The programme helps me grow, both personally and professionally

I am Margret Mutsambwa aged 49, a lecturer at Seke Teachers' College in Zimbabwe. Currently I am the Health and Life Skills Education Coordinator. And I am also a member of the College Core-team coordinating the Quality Education and Vulnerability Programme supported by VVOB. One of my duties is to facilitate and organise college-based, participatory workshops, supporting student peer educators in their outreach to other students and surrounding communities.

The programme has been of great benefit to me as a professional in a number of ways. Firstly, I am more able to work together with other members in a team. This helps to successfully hold planned workshops. Secondly, as a subject area head, I put into practice the participatory methodologies, used in the workshops, in my lectures, to help students understand the materials better. Thirdly, periodic reflections and constructive feedback from the VVOB Support Team have made me learn and improve in my work and be more accommodating to other people's views.

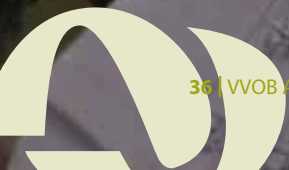
I have gained a lot from the capacity building processes I was involved in (in terms of skills, knowledge and attitude). I am able to guide and mentor the student peer educators of my college. In an outreach programme they support out-of-school peer educators at Young Africa Skills Centre nearby.

Because of the programme, I have also grown as a person... The content from workshops I have facilitated (for example, Life skills for new intake students) has helped me to communicate better at home. I am more assertive and can stand for what I believe is right and defend myself if necessary. I can use the knowledge I have gained in workshops to help relatives who are affected and infected with HIV and AIDS. I have a sister who has told me she is HIV positive and she benefits from information I gain when supporting peer educators. Examples which come to mind are information from Moving on workshops, Positive Living through Nutrition and Stigma and Discrimination workshops.

As a mother I have moved a step further, and I am free to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues that are considered taboo in our culture. I can now discuss condom use with my sons to really make sure they know how to use them properly and I can explain the importance of consistent use (that is if they have failed to abstain and have to indulge). I can now discuss issues to do with dating and other issues which could be surrounding it with my teenage daughters. This used to be the preserve of 'vana Tete navana Sekuru', the uncles and aunts in our culture.

Indeed the programme has been of benefit to me and my college. It is great that there lie many opportunities ahead that will help us turn our workplace into a student-friendly college. My dream is that the teachers who graduate from our college are sensitive to child vulnerabilities and take steps to offer opportunities to all the children in their classrooms.





Financial report

Development Education

Since the launch of the *SchoolLinks* programme and the take-off of the school partnerships, the expenditure rate has been the following: in 2009-2010 € 102,625 was spent, of which € 14,050 was transferred directly to partner schools in the South. This trend will continue in 2010, resulting in about 40 involved schools by the end of that year. Continued funding of this programme is needed, as the schools (50 in 2011) develop their partnership over a period of 3 to 6 years. Therefore, we will again appeal to the Flemish government, that assisted to the start-up of this programme with a split credit of € 379,000 in 2008.

DGDC funding: operational, structural and management costs

In 2009, a total of € 8,999,999 was made available, of which € 8,796,728 was spent. This results in an expenditure rate of 98%.

In the course of 2009, we determined that the expenditure rate of the operational expenses in the partner countries was not going well. With targeted measures, that did not compromise the quality of our work, a substantial recovery was initiated, resulting in an expenditure rate of 99%. € 7,581,661 has been spent of a budget of € 7,651,139. We presume that in 2010 we can continue to spend at current pace.

The management costs amount to € 721,055 in 2009 and consist of costs that are made both in head office (salaries, missions, reflection days,...) and in the South (evaluation costs, local audit,...).

The total structural costs amount to € 768,880. € 494,012 of which is to the account of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGDC) and € 250,000 is at the expense of the Flemish Government through a structural operating grant.

Donor Diversification

In Zimbabwe, VVOB collaborated with UNICEF and Save the Children, for an amount of €168,009. In the DR Congo, an agricultural project has been completed, which was funded by the Flemish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (€ 52,655). In Rwanda, the national Ministry of Education made € 151,136 available for the VVOB School Management programme. Finally, the Brussels-Capital Region provided a grant of € 20,000 for the purchase of books for the Kigali Health Institute in Rwanda.

Result

The result for 2009 is € 55,861. This is comparable to the result in 2008, that amounted to € 64,971. We use this result to supplement the reserve for social passive up to € 131,547. In addition, the earmarked reserves are completed for the repatriation of associates and their holiday pay, amounting to a total of € 14,708.

All this brings the final result of 2009, which is attached to the liability account "retained result", to a negative amount of -€ 90,394. This way, the balance reduces from € 155,162 to € 64,768.

Balance

The balance rises to € 14,766,898. The liquidity position is comfortable (assets / current liabilities = 123%). The ratios of equity / debt (22%) and equity / total liabilities (18%) are acceptable, but rather on the low side.

Audit

All programmes in the South are subject to an annual local audit. In four countries KPMG was called upon. The audit of accounts in Brussels was conducted by auditor Ernst & Young. The commissioner made no significant observations for the year 2009.



Balance sheet

	2009	2008
Assets		
A. Fixed assets	55,201	49,541
B. Accounts receivable (due within 1 year)	9,159,935	6,565,014
C. Cash and investments	5,518,269	5,427,976
D. Prepaid expenses	33,493	31,422
Total Assets	14,766,898	12,073,953
Liabilities		
A. Reserves and accrued profit/loss	2,628,936	2,573,075
B. Provisions	130,000	110,000
C. Accounts payable (due within 1 year)	12,007,962	9,390,878
Total Liabilities	14,766,898	12,073,953

P&L

	2009	2008
Costs		
A. Structural costs	768,880	631,515
a. Services and diverse goods	248,638	239,639
b. Personnel costs	382,637	355,811
c. Depreciation	22,867	21,525
d. Other costs	114,738	14,540
B. Management costs	721,055	594,374
a. Personnel costs ('North' and 'South') * from 2009 only 'North'	497,230	464,797
b. Audit, monitoring and evaluation, learning processes	194,067	114,422
c. Other	29,757	15,155
C. Operational costs (programme costs)	8,062,930	5,589,317
a. DGCD programme	7,581,661	5,479,438
b. FICA programme (<i>SchoolLinks</i>)	102,625	27,372
c. Other programmes	378,644	82,506
Total costs	9,552,865	6,815,207
Income		
a. Subsidy	9,548,637	6,807,450
b. Financial income	41,070	69,497
c. Other income	19,019	3,231
Total income	9,608,726	6,880,178
Result of book year	-90,394	3,196
Result before use	55,861	64,971
Use of result	146,255	61,775
Calculation of deferral of book year		
Profit (loss)	(90,394)	3,196
Retained earnings	155,162	151,965
Deferral of book year	64,768	155,162

Annex

Management of VVOB vzw in 2009

Below is a list of the members of the **General Assembly** of VVOB vzw. The members of the **Board of Directors** are on top of the list.

General Assembly	Board of Directors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● President:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Stefaan Van Mulders, Administrator-General of Youth Welfare AgencyMrs. Ann Breemersch, Director of Flemish Department of Agriculture and FisheriesMrs. Ann Brusseel, Member of the Flemish parliament (new member as successor of Mrs. Anne Marie Hoebeke)Mrs. Martine Caron, Delegate of VLHORAMr. Johan Debar, Office of the Minister of Development Cooperation, Indirect Collaboration (new member as successor of Mr. Jochen Devadder)Mrs. Maria De Smet, Delegate of VLHORAMr. Matthias Diependaele, Member of the Flemish parliament (new member as successor of Mr. Jan Loones)Mr. Jos Geysels, President of 11.11.11Mrs. Judith Kerkhof, Development ExpertMrs. Ruth Lamotte, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, Department International RelationsMr. Luc Lathouwers, Secretary-General, Department of Administration AffairsMr. Peter Michielsens, Coordinating Inspector General of the Flemish Ministry of Education and TrainingMr. Peter Moors, Director-General, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation DGDCMr. Marc Olivier, Founding memberMrs. Sabine Poleyn, Member of the Flemish parliamentMr. Jan Roegiers, Member of the Flemish parliament (new member as successor of Mr. Kurt De Loor)Mrs. Inge Roggeman, V.I.W. FoundationProf. Patrick Sorgeloos, President of VLIR-UOS, UGentMr. Jef Tavernier, Member (successor of Mr. Christophe Maréchal)Mrs. Heidi Vander Poorten, Flemish Ministry of Equal OpportunitiesMr. Raf Van Hoof, Communication Manager, Department of Finance and BudgetMrs. Kristien Verbrugghen, Director of VLIR-UOSMr. Koen Verlaeckt, Secretary-General of Flanders InternationalMr. Christian Verougstraete, Member of the Flemish parliament (new member as successor of Mr. Roland Van Goethem)Mrs. Mieke Vogels, Member of the Flemish parliament (new member as successor of Mr. Jef Tavernier)Mrs. Ulla Werbroeck, Member of the Flemish parliament
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mrs. Soetkin Bauwens, OVSG● Mrs. Lisbet Colson, VSKO● Mrs. Betty De Wachter, Coordinator of VVSG International● Mr. Jan Geens, Director Internationalisation of VLHORA● Prof. Marlies Lacante, KULeuven Psychology Department● Prof. Stefaan Marysse, Member of VLIR-UOS, UA● Prof. Marc Nyssen, Vice president of VLIR-UOS, VUB● Mr. Walter Thiebaut, V.I.W. Foundation● Mr. Luc Van de Velde, Delegate of VLHORA● Mrs. Raymonda Verdyck, Managing Director of GO! (new member as successor of Mr. Urbain Lavigne)

VVOB is the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance, a non-profit organisation. Commissioned by the Flemish and Belgian governments, we contribute to the quality of education in developing countries. Our core business is to provide technical assistance in educational programmes. This way VVOB supports local capacity building as a means to stimulate sustainable development and poverty reduction.



VVOB vzw

Handelsstraat 31
1000 Brussels
Belgium

T • +32 (0)2 209 07 99

F • +32 (0)2 209 07 98

E • info@vvob.be

W • www.vvob.be

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

**THE BELGIAN
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

