

LOCAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Sister Schools is more than a learning method for schools in an international digital context. The Project Based Learning (PBL) methodology enables pupils to make a positive change in the learning- and living environment of their schools through real life projects. In order to be effective and help the pupils setting up the projects, Sister Schools creates Local Learning Communities (LLC's) around the schools.

EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The context in which Sister Schools operates is subject to rapid changes. The increasing need for digitization and internationalization within education, asks for new working methods.

The exchanges between the schools come with a variety of situation requirements. Some schools need more guidance than others and some schools don't have a digital learning environment yet, while others are already well equipped for modern education.

There are also changes on a political and cultural level and due to the Corona crisis, education must be able to act extra flexible to teach the students as best as possible, even when schools have to close.

The enthusiasm and passion from which the organization started is also translated into the organizational structure. The more the actors and the communities feel involved in strategic planning with a high level of responsibility, the greater the chance that the motivated responsibility of each individual can contribute to the improvement of the Sister Schools product as a whole.

Therefore Sister Schools offers a continuous guidance- and learning path for teachers & Sister Schools employees / volunteers in addition to the two-year school program. This creates a life-long learning cycle, in which the students can ultimately become the trainers and teachers of the future.

WHAT

Local needs and projects around schools can easily be initiated and realized with the help of a Local Learning Community (LLC). The LLC's form the strategic units within the Sister Schools Organization. Expertise, knowledge and practical advice can be shared between the several LLC's across the country.

WHO

LLC'S consist of 10-12 people; experts in the field of communication, digitization, project planning, fundraising, (social) media, marketing & Sister Schools teachers & coordinators. People who are willing to give their time, expertise and energy to realize the projects

initiated by the pupils of the Sister Schools. The experts have their own expertise and are complementary to each other. Flexibility is increased because there is sufficient overlap. Learning by doing and learning by working together, sharing information, knowledge and experiences is at the core of the Sister Schools programme and in the LLC's.

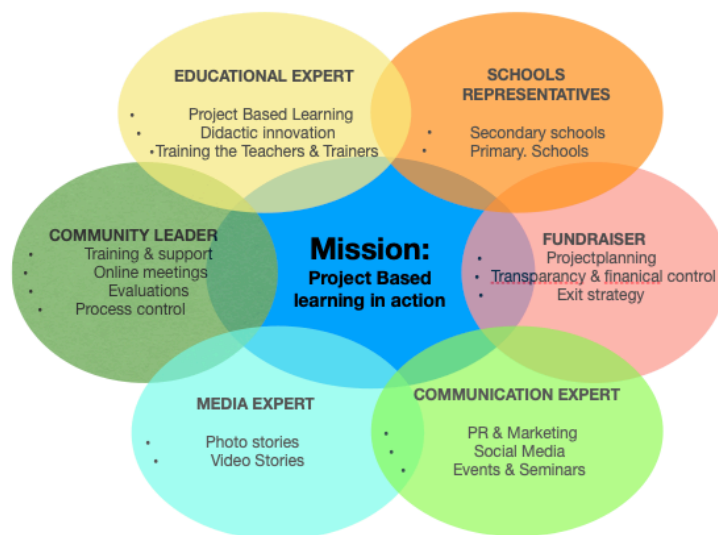


FIGURE 1: A Local Learning Community consist of 10-12 people

WHY

Educational inequality is **the unequal distribution of academic resources**, including; school funding, qualified and experienced teachers, books, and technologies to socially excluded communities. The World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) highlights the powerful influence of circumstances, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and location, over which people have little control but which play an important role in shaping their opportunities for education and life. It draws attention to unacceptable levels of education inequality across countries and between groups within countries, with the aim of helping to inform policy design and public debate.

In Kenya for example on a population of 52.6 million, 66.2 % lives below \$3.20 a day. In the North Eastern part of Kenya 34 % has never been to school.

GOALS

Sister Schools Local Learning Communities core objective is to improve participation, engagement, attainment and project outcomes for young people within its geographical boundaries. Sister Schools Local Learning Communities:

- aim to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of teachers, volunteers, stakeholders and local citizens in general
- focus on adding value to the public and private investment in education.
- commit to improve the living- and learning environment of the schools.

ACTIVITIES

The members of the LLCs meet at least six times a year; at the beginning and end of the Sister Schools' three blocks. Halfway through the two-year exchange period, the LLCs make an exit strategy so that the project results are sustainable and the school continues to grow and improve, even without the "Sistership", the agreement between the two schools.

In concrete terms, the activities during these meetings consist of:

- evaluation & formative assessment of the Sister Schools lessons
- making suggestions for improving international communication & digital networks
- facilitating and supporting various student/school initiatives through project development, project planning, implementation and evaluation of projects.
- developing partnerships and collaboration with and among stakeholders to provide better pathways and give support to young people and their ideas and projects.
- connect with local education and training systems & governmental organisations.

LLCs have a particular focus on executing projects together with youth (10-19 years) arising from the lessons within the Sister Schools programs.

HOW

Sister Schools is a network organisation.

By joining a LLC in your neighbourhood, you can make a difference to your community by contributing to strategies and projects that improve the living- and learning environment and improve education and training outcomes for young people.

Any organisation or individual with an interest in education, training and employment outcomes for young people can be involved in the LLC in their area. The professional volunteer comes from all over the world and brings a wealth of perspectives, expertise and ideas. Together, based on experience and knowledge from different backgrounds, we can make a difference in the local context.

WHAT WE OFFER

LLCs must be supported by a range of groups and (local) organizations, including education and training providers, business and industry, civil society organizations.

For education and training providers, joining an LLC can help you better tailor education and training programs to the needs of the community, including skills shortages. We offer:

- internships
- work experience places
- research and validation programs

For business and industry we offer:

- the opportunity to make positive change in the lives of young people worldwide
- access to our expertise and network
- publicity & visibility
- work experience abroad

For civil society organizations we can help you to:

- helping people with a disadvantage in the labor market on their way to paid work

- to solve social issues together
- increase network and community engagement

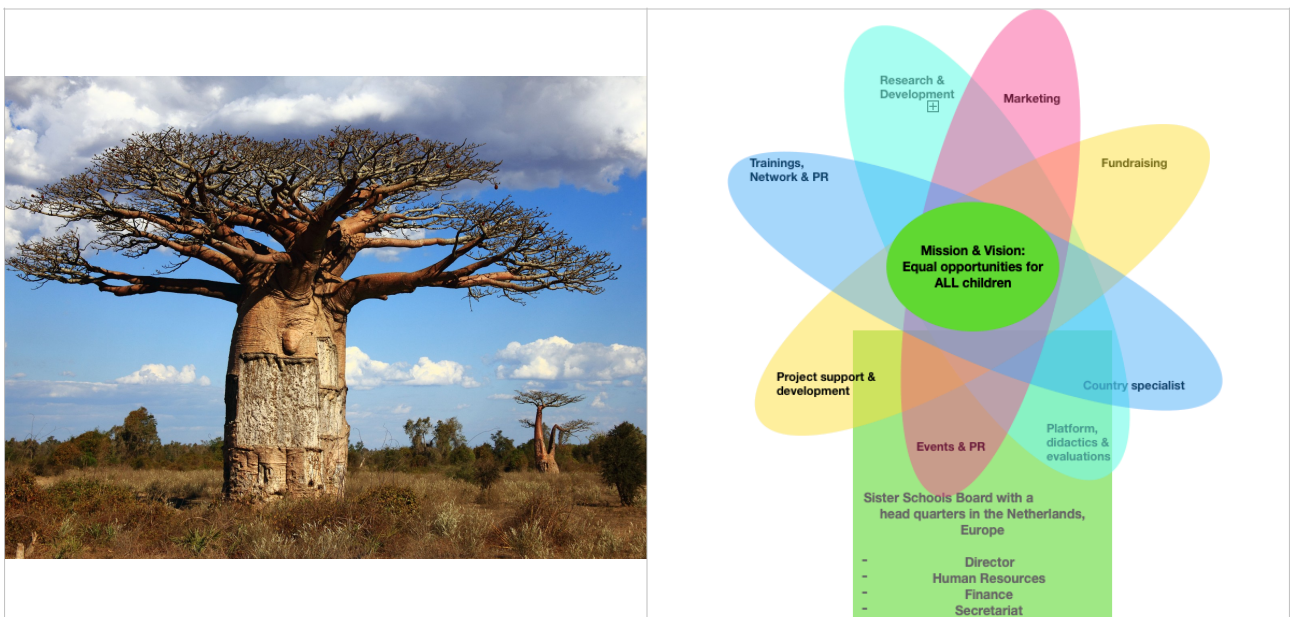
The LLC's projects benefit the students and their learning process indirectly or directly. The project results and evaluations are shared with the community. In this way, each LLC can learn from other LLC's, improve projects and contribute to making good education accessible and attainable for ALL children, worldwide.

INTERNATIONAL SISTER SCHOOLS ORGANIZATION

Just like the Local Learning Communities, the international organization is also a learning organization, in which multiple parties and stakeholders determine the success of the digital exchange programs between the sister schools.

The functional structure of the future organizational network Sister Schools is described from an integral model, in which the relationships between the various actors can be distinguished into:

1. relationships within the Local Learning Communities (LLCs); schools, teachers, coordinators, sponsors, ICT and educational experts and marketing specialists provide the right mix of knowledge and capacity to successfully set up and implement projects at the local level. The students of the Sister Schools help with the design and realization of the projects and are a crucial element in strengthening the schools and the neighborhoods in which the schools function.
2. relationships between the actors with specific expertise within different LLCs. In this way, the marketing specialists from different groups can mutually coordinate which actions they take and they can use the same resources
3. The LLC's relationships with the organization as a whole, symbolized by the Baobab tree.



FLEXIBLE WORKING COMMUNITIES

Every community has its own specific challenges, needs and working methods. The figure below schematically shows how the LLC's can differ from each other. Differences in 'Organization', 'Funds', 'Location' & 'Scope and Activities'. Sister Schools provides support in shaping the LLC's, with the goal that these units can eventually function on their own.



FIGURE 2: Functioning of a Local Learning Community /Model (Source: The Allen Consulting Group)