

Learning Unlimited.

Championing teachers and school leaders for SDG 4



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Quality education matters:

VVOB's vision

“Quality education is the foundation for development. VVOB contributes to an equitable world in which governments are capacitated to respect, protect and fulfil the right to quality education for every learner, without any form of discrimination”

- VVOB by-laws, article 5

Taking a rights-based approach, VVOB's vision points (i) to the role of governments as 'the duty bearers' and (ii) to the right to education of every learner as 'the rights holders'. Putting this approach into practice, VVOB partners with ministries of education to provide innovative solutions that ensure education systems are equitable and inclusive, and thus provide quality education.

Teachers and school leaders are key actors in this endeavour and, as such, VVOB's first consideration. Equity in education, and equity through education, is the guiding principle.

VVOB's vision on quality education is underpinned by international (legal) consensus. It is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the most widely ratified human rights convention in history. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all UN member states in 2015, recognises the pivotal role of quality education in spurring personal empowerment and economic growth, and in promoting inclusion and reducing inequality in society.

As such, education cannot be considered a standalone issue; it should be part of every public conversation. The world forgoes progress on gender, climate, equity and inclusion if education is not attributed an important role in the process, and VVOB works to champion that role.



Towards 2030:

VVOB's ambitions

By 2030, VVOB and partners have improved education systems for children and youth in general; and have proactively addressed specific education challenges with flagships on (i) gender-transformative pedagogy, (ii) effective school leadership and (iii) skilling for sustainable futures, as key areas of VVOB expertise.

1. Improving education for children



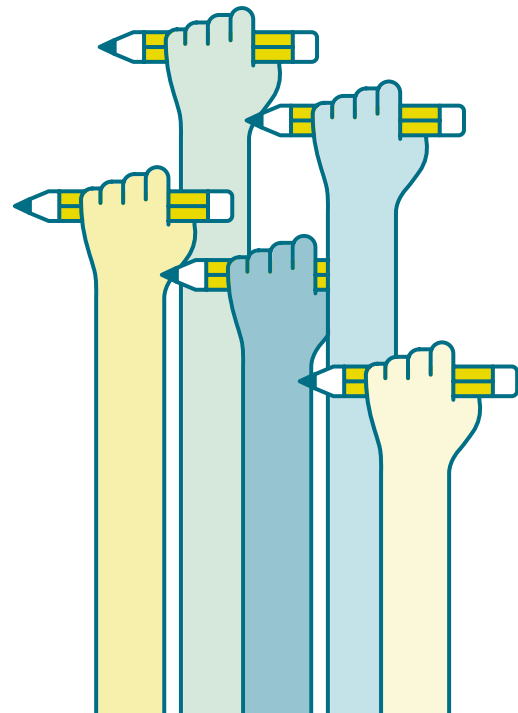
VVOB and partners ensure a smooth transition from early childhood to primary education for 4 million children by 2030.

Children from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds often start primary school with a setback. Research shows that this disadvantage can lead to early dropout.

Quality and accessible early childhood education (ECE) and a smooth transition into primary education are crucial to mitigate this unfair socio-economic barrier, and to improve equity and inclusion in the education system more broadly. In this respect, play is an important vehicle: learning through play puts children at the centre of the learning process, improves the wellbeing of learners and closes the gap between ECE and primary education.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at country, regional and supranational level in:

- the strengthening of professionalisation structures specifically for ECE teachers through initial teacher education and continuous professional development;
- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures for school leaders that stimulate the establishment of positive and welcoming learning environments for ECE and primary school learners;
- emergent literacy and emergent maths to prepare learners properly for their learning careers and future roles in society.





VVOB and partners ensure that at least 6 million children acquire foundational and transferable skills by the end of primary education by 2030.

School enrolment rates have never been so high. Research however points to a learning crisis: large numbers of learners do not acquire the necessary basic skills for reading, writing and maths by the end of primary school.

Together with transferable skills, foundational literacy and numeracy skills lay the basis for other abilities that are critical for success in school and life. These skills can be developed through a mix of structured pedagogy, assessment-informed instruction and learning through play.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at national, regional and supranational level in:

- the strengthening of professionalisation structures specifically for primary education teachers through initial teacher education and continuous professional development;
- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures for school leaders that stimulate the establishment of positive and welcoming learning environments for primary school learners;
- foundational literacy and numeracy skills as well as transferable skills to prepare learners properly for their learning careers and future roles in society;
- specific initiatives that ensure learners that fall behind or drop out, can catch up and continue their schooling;
- proactively eliminating barriers to learning and other forms of discrimination in primary education.

2. Improving education for youth

In order to equip youth with the tools to have ownership over their futures, ministries of education are investing in secondary education system reforms to include transferable, digital and entrepreneurial skills.

These skills have never been more important: transferable, digital and entrepreneurial skills not only provide a framework for successful learning in the classroom, they also ensure learners can thrive in a world where change is constant and learning never stops.



VVOB and partners ensure that at least 3 million young people acquire transferable, digital and entrepreneurial skills by the end of secondary education by 2030.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at national, regional and supranational level in:

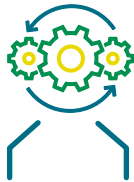
- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures specifically for secondary education teachers through initial teacher education and continuous professional development;
- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures for school leaders that stimulate the establishment of positive and welcoming learning environments for secondary school learners;
- transferable, digital and entrepreneurial skills to prepare learners properly for their learning careers and future roles in society;
- proactively eliminating barriers to learning and other forms of discrimination in secondary education.

3. Flagships

Flagships are evidence-informed, scalable, cross-border initiatives that structurally address persistent educational challenges through key efforts for equitable learning outcomes:



gender-transformative pedagogy



effective school leadership



skilling for sustainable futures

Moving beyond existing implementation partnerships with governments, VVOB's flagships have a distinct regional and international ambition. They are run by a hub of specialists that support in-country teams, governments around the world and likeminded organisations to develop approaches on the flagships, adapted to local contexts, and to embed these within education systems.

As an implementing organisation, VVOB relies on its experts and expertise on quality education for children and youth, as explained before. This expertise feeds into the continuously developing flagships while, conversely, new evidence and lessons learnt from those flagships further strengthen VVOB's operational activities.

1



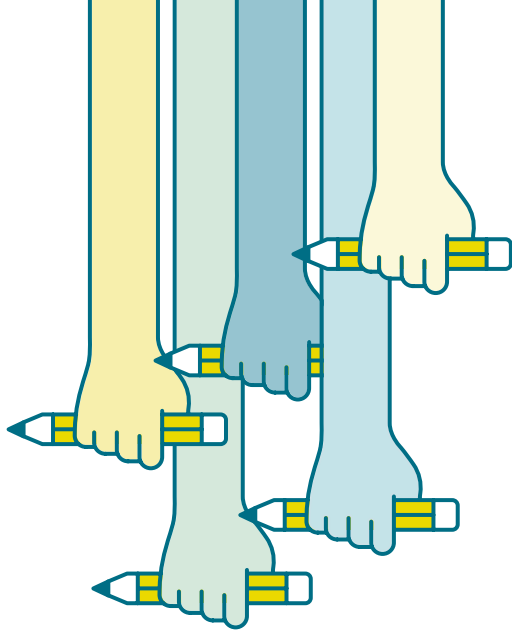
Gender-transformative pedagogy

Around the world, gender-based discrimination and violence form major obstacles to quality education. Parents' and teachers' expectations for learners are still heavily influenced by harmful gender stereotypes. As a result, millions of learners are not achieving their full potential. Both at individual and societal level, this has overwhelming adverse consequences.

Through gender-transformative pedagogy, teachers and school leaders tackle this issue by creating learning environments where harmful gender stereotypes are challenged and addressed.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at national, regional and supranational level in:

- specific interventions to strengthen teachers' and school leaders' competences to apply gender-transformative pedagogy;
- mainstreaming gender-transformative pedagogy in the curricula of initial teacher education and continuous professional development;
- the establishment of an international knowledge platform that supports ministries of education to implement and mainstream gender-transformative pedagogy.



2



Effective school leadership

No school sustainably improves the quality of education in the absence of effective school leadership. School leaders have a vital role in creating the conditions for effective teaching and learning. Through a set of leadership behaviours that affect student learning, good school leaders identify aspects of their schools on which to focus in order to help learners learn.

In today's world, school leadership is a priority in education policy agendas internationally.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at national, regional and supranational level in:

- the development of accredited professionalisation courses for school leaders;
- the establishment of School Leadership Units at national and sub-national level of the ministries of education;
- the establishment of an international centre for school leadership that offers guidance and support to ministries of education on school leadership.

3



Skilling for sustainable futures

Quality education plays a vital role in turning many countries' potential demographic dividend into reality. But big investments are needed to improve the quality of secondary and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and ensure that young people leave school with high chances at securing decent work. Entrepreneurial skills are especially crucial for young people to decide their lifepaths.

Education reforms open the door to tackling one of the world's most pressing challenges: climate change. Through 'greening' secondary education and TVET, education's impact once again goes far beyond learning alone.

To support ministries of education, VVOB and partners invest at national, regional and supranational level in:

- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures for teachers through initial teacher education and continuous professional development;
- the development and strengthening of professionalisation structures for school leaders that stimulate the establishment of positive and welcoming learning environments for students, as well as linkages with the world of work;
- the relevance and 'greening' of secondary education and TVET through structural collaboration between the education sector and the world of work, with a focus on skilling for sustainable tourism and green agriculture;
- proactively eliminating barriers to learning and job stereotypes for young men and women and any other forms of discrimination in secondary education and TVET.

Getting it done:

VVOB's approach

VVOB has a unique approach to realise its ambitions.



VVOB is the preferential partner of ministries of education for advice, guidance and support on system strengthening of teacher and school leader professional development.

Many governments have policy plans in place to continuously improve their education system in order to achieve SDG 4. VVOB puts these plans at the centre of its partnership with the ministry of education. VVOB provides innovative solutions that support ministries to ensure education systems are equitable and inclusive, and thus provide quality education.

VVOB realises this through:

- the organisation's internationally recognised expertise on professionalisation of teachers and school leaders;
- an approach of education diplomacy that is aimed at collaboration and acknowledgement of existing expertise. VVOB listens to and thinks along with governments. A choice is made together for feasible and widely supported solutions;
- an approach that considers scalability of interventions from the beginning. This way, results can be scaled up cost-efficiently and effectively by governments, VVOB and/or other partners;
- an approach that is evidence-based. Interventions are based on scientific research (and/or generate evidence that can be validated through scientific research) and practical experience. This way, governments know that the approach works and is sound.



VVOB brings organisations together to face and tackle educational challenges jointly and comprehensively.

The education sector faces many complex and multidimensional challenges. The call for solutions should be observed in different domains of expertise to generate the most effective, positive and sustainable changes.

Partnerships and networks, as well as cocreation and mutual learning, are key.

VVOB realises this through:

- structural collaboration with (sub)national and international partners – both governments and CSOs – that are specialised in education, gender, the world of work, climate, etc;
- active efforts and calls for professionalisation of teachers and school leaders in (sub)national, international and supranational platforms and consortia;
- structural collaboration with governments, civil society, research institutions and private actors;
- active collaboration with financial partners.



VVOB is an equitable, diverse and inclusive organisation in terms of both its project activities and organisational practices.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are part of VVOB's DNA: not only concerning what VVOB does, but also how VVOB does things. As a global organisation, diversity is an important organisational asset to achieve better results.

VVOB realises this through:

- an HR policy and practice that ensures equal opportunity for all staff members, at all levels in the organisation, without any form of discrimination;
- an international dialogue between peer experts and organisations, based on equity and mutual learning;
- a clear vision, policy and practice on integrity to ensure that people within VVOB and its partners feel safe at all times. A clear child protection policy, and clear standards and processes on respectful behaviour are part of this approach.



As an efficient, ecologic and cost-effective organisation, VVOB invests in and relies on research and evidence in its decision-making.

As resources are scarce and valuable, VVOB guarantees value for money by investing resources cost-effectively, yet ambitiously. VVOB does not limit itself to low-hanging fruit, but goes the extra mile(s) to where real and sustainable impact can be achieved.

Here, research is key. Our interventions are informed by the best available evidence from research and practice. Monitoring, evaluation and research helps us identify what works best – and what doesn't. That's why we also invest in monitoring, evaluation and research as an integral part of our interventions to better understand, apply and scale approaches. We share our learning with our partners and other stakeholders for wider use and scaling.



VVOB is a renowned expert organisation that employs the best talents in the sector. As such, decisions at VVOB are made at the most decentralised level possible through shared leadership. This contributes to the enjoyable and vibrant work environment at VVOB.

VVOB is an agile organisation that is able to constantly adapt to new contexts and challenges through:

- a firm belief in the capacities of staff members;
- an entrepreneurial environment in which staff members are granted the space to take initiatives;
- an attitude that values expertise over formal hierarchy, enabling genuine shared leadership;
- decentralised structures within clear global frameworks.

For these and many other reasons, people enjoy working for VVOB. VVOB is a value-driven and ambitious organisation where staff members grow professionally and contribute to better education for children and young people. Staff wellbeing is high on the agenda. VVOB provides a warm, pleasant, and safe working environment.

As an expert organisation, continuous professional development is a priority. VVOB attracts the best talents in the sector of education and development, and nurtures up-and-coming talents into renowned experts. Employees have many opportunities to participate in professionalisation courses, both internally and externally.

With Learning Unlimited., VVOB is ready to react and adapt to today's fast-changing world, while staying true to some unique characteristics of its approach:

- **Ministries of education are VVOB's key partners.** These government stakeholders have the mandate to create real change within the education system, both at national and sub-national level.
- **The professionalisation of teachers and school leaders is VVOB's priority focus.** Research shows that teachers have the biggest impact on both the wellbeing and learning outcomes of learners. And for teachers to teach effectively, their school leaders need to provide enabling and supportive environments.
- **VVOB invests in international partnerships and sharing of evidence and expertise as both a means and an end to achieving worldwide quality education.** Though a (sub-)national matter, quality education is taken up ever more frequently by international and supranational platforms and forums as a priority concern.

VVOB realises sustainable change through **education diplomacy**: through close and equitable collaboration with a broad range of a partner country's governmental and other stakeholders, VVOB ensures that matters of quality education are and remain high on the policy agenda over longer periods of time and administrations.

VVOB is a value-driven organisation:



Quality

in achievements and learning



Integrity

in professional relations and in leadership



Respect

for local policies, people and planet



Commitment

to quality education for all




Innovation

in facing complex challenges



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