



Reaching out to nature is now easier than ever

Sweden

Project name:
Biodiversity

Teacher:
Bitte Kajler

School:
Spanga Upper Secondary School,
Spanga

Learning areas:
Nature Sciences

Objectives:
To give the children in Sweden the knowledge about biodiversity and sustainable development

Outcomes:
Pupils are now more aware of the environmental issues and are able to understand distant ecosystems

“Using nature in a way consistent with sustainable development imposes demands on scientific, as well as technical and economic expertise.”

— Bitte Kajler, Spanga Upper Secondary School

The main objective of this project was for the students to obtain knowledge about biodiversity and sustainable development, to be able to interact and use technology and Internet to communicate over great distances. The project gave them deeper knowledge about animals, nature and environment, and provided them a way to communicate with the students in the twin school in Madagascar, receiving knowledge from them directly, and passing it on to younger students in Sweden.



Situation

Bitte Kajler is a teacher in animalcare at Spanga Upper Secondary School in Sweden, a unique education institution with a total of around 1,200 animals on the school premises, divided on 100 species. In the autumn 2005 she visited the island of Madagascar, which has incredible biodiversity and cultural practices, making it a place like no other; around 80% of its native flora and fauna are unique to this island. Madagascar is considered among the poorest countries in the world, with 70% of Malagasy suffering from malnutrition. Madagascar’s main capital also has a unique environment, but the lack of fuel and food forces the population to drain many of its important resources. It was very difficult do depict this to pupils in Sweden, making them understand the importance of biodiversity.

„Closeness and access to natural resources, not only in school but also in workplaces, provides the conditions for linking together theoretical and practical work.“

— Bitte Kajler, Spanga Upper Secondary School

Objectives

As the resources of the world is a great issue of today, and a responsibility of all human beings, ideas about a project together with the youth of Sweden and collaboration and working with authentic subjects were even given as a directive from Sweden School Department.

The main objectives of the project are for the students to obtain knowledge about biodiversity and sustainable development, to be able to give constructive proposals how to interact and collaborate over the borders, and prepare the collaboration around such a project. The TWINSCHOOL project gives the students possibility to know and understand different cultures and biological diversity. This kind of cooperation requires established communications through modern and advanced technologies. As today most of the communication goes through mobile phones, e-mail and interactive smartboards, this is the way that the school of the future will be in connection with other schools around the world. In order to make this a possibility, not only words and ideas, a foundation 'Twinschool – Madagascar Model' was established, with the aim to preserve the biological diversity through education and personal connections in the global classroom.

Real cooperation in different projects leads to new knowledge and understanding for different cultures. This understanding leads the students to take an active role in care and interest in, both global and local, the world's big issues. The students were encouraged to use their own creativity in the process, as they can use different technical aids, such as music, digital cameras etc. The product of their work should be something they can use at their exhibition in their senior year.

Outcomes

The work on this project gave the children an opportunity to strengthen and develop skills in an area that is vital for the education. This education provided knowledge that the earth's resources are definite and stressed the importance of conservation of biodiversity, while communicating with peers from very distant cultures and surroundings.

“Using nature in a way consistent with sustainable development imposes demands on scientific, as well as technical and economic expertise”, says Bitte Kajler. “Closeness and access to natural resources, not only in school but also in workplaces, provides the conditions for linking together theoretical and practical work. In this way the program provides basic insights into different areas of knowledge in the natural sciences”, concludes Bitte Kajler, teacher from Spanga Upper Secondary School in Sweden.