Global High Schools

Along with the shift of important decision areas from national institutions towards international networks it becomes crucial to provide students with an understanding of global aspects of society, politics and cultural interaction. These changes – challenges as well as possibilities – requires that we are able to act both at a local, national and global level and as a result students need to encounter the tools that will enable them to become an active part of that process. The recent reform of the Danish high schools is well aware of this need, but the first three years of its implementation has shown great difficulties in meeting the requirements - and as a result high schools are still not able to integrate a global perspective into their teaching and pedagogical strategies.

The initiative *Global High Schools* is a close co-work between a group of Danish high schools and a network of NGO's and education developers, and involves implementing strategies to strengthen the global perspective in every area of the high school – pedagogy, teaching materials, exchange programs, projects and social activities to name some of the areas. It will place an important focus on the dialogue with students and organizations in other parts of the world both through exchange programs and the web. The aim is to contribute to the formation of young global citizens who are able to:

- place themselves in an interconnected world
- enter in constructive dialogue
- deal with cultural differences
- connect knowledge and praxis
- use innovative ways in dealing with global challenges
- interact on local, national and global levels

We see the north-south dimension as integrated in a construction of global awareness. It is no longer possible – if it has ever been – to separate the fishing industry in Lake Victoria from the weapon industry of France, or the migration to the ever faster growing cities in the global south from food production in the EU. We cannot separate the challenges, dreams and visions that young people face in New York, in Sao Paolo or in Copenhagen connected as they are by commercials, music and media. Nor can we keep choosing not to find solutions to the immediate problems of the global south as outlined in the 2015 goals.

Half of the high schools included in the project have a high percentage of students with an immigrant background (most of them being from the Middle East). We find it important to investigate - along with the central citizenship-aspect - whether the integration of a global perspective can strengthen the participation and inclusion of these students in the Danish high school system.

Partners:

The project has been initiated out of the experience with students in Danish Folk High Schools – a school system playing a historical role in the formation of Danish society and democracy. It will be developed in close connection with the involved schools and organizations through 2008 and 2009 and initiated with the school year 2009. Four high schools with a total of 350 teachers and 3500 students are involved in the project together with two NGOs.

Operation Day's Work coordinates tens of thousands of Danish high-school students, who each year give a day of their education in order to raise funds for an education project in the developing world. Operation Day's Work produces educational materials and arranges educational events as an alternative to conventional teaching methods in the Danish high-school system. The quality of the teaching material is ensured thanks to the assistance of teachers and scholars who place their vast knowledge at the disposal of the organization. The aim is to engage the students in discussions and debate on issues concerning developing countries while motivating the students to participate actively on the work day.

Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke supports together with 200 partner organizations in Africa, Central America, Asia, the Middle East and in the Balkans the poor in the struggle for a better life. Their partners range from big national organisations to small community based groups, working with education, community development, the environment, hiv/aids, human rights and much more. Where other organizations provide medicine, roads or financial support, Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke focus on training, education, self-organisation and exchange of experience – on investment in people because people are the most important resource in the development process.