

Focus on the climate issue

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In 1999 Tina Sølбек Schmidt went to Iceland for a training course. As a biology teacher, she realized already at this stage what an interesting starting point a school cooperation with Iceland ? with its dramatic nature so different from the Danish ? would be for the biology subject. Nine years later the school management at Fredericia upper secondary school gave Tina the green light to reify her plans.



? I thought it would be interesting for my pupils to learn more about global warming in another country. Both the effects of it and how they work with the issue at school.

So says Tina Sølбек Schmidt, biology teacher at Fredericia upper secondary school in Denmark, about the Danish-Icelandic Nordplus Junior project that she started in 2008.

? We had been working quite a lot on ecology, pollution and global warming in class. This was a way to make the subject more interesting for the pupils, Tina says.

On the Internet, she found an upper secondary school teacher in Reykjavik who was interested in a cooperation project. Thanks to Nordplus Junior funding, the two schools could carry through an exchange.

Glaciers, geysers and whale safari

In September 2008, Tina's class went to Iceland to see glaciers, waterfalls, geysers and to go on a whale safari. In March 2009, the Icelandic partner class came to Fredericia. By then, the climate was an even hotter issue due to the upcoming climate summit in Copenhagen in December.

? Close to Fredericia there is a forest with trees 30 metres high, something that does not exist in Iceland. So the Icelandic pupils found this pretty exotic.

On the agenda during the visits stood also climate lectures at the universities in Copenhagen and Reykjavik, museum visits and time at the schools. In between the physical meetings, the classes had contact through e.g. Facebook. They also worked with the same tasks and experiments in class and exchanged results over the Internet.

? I could see some differences in the way we worked. On Iceland, they spent quite a lot of time observing e.g. plants in a microscope. In Denmark, I think we are more focused on the results of

the observations.

Have learned a lot

Tina thinks that her pupils have learned a lot through the cooperation. They put much effort into the project and in preparing their presentations.

? The meetings with the Icelandic youths also made my pupils aware of how the education system functions in another country. Thanks to that, they can put their own school situation in relation to something.

The project has also been prized: Tina sent it to a ?Young Scientists? school competition ? which they won! Also, the cooperation has created a ripple effect. One of Tina?s teacher colleagues recently started a new Nordplus project in history, were she cooperates with another class at the upper secondary school in Reykjavik. Tina also plans a continuation, and maybe deepening, of her own project in the future.

? The school manager has said that I am welcome to go abroad again if I want to, so maybe I will take another class to Iceland in a few years time.



Amazed
Danes in
Iceland.
[Photo:
Fredericia
Gymnasium]
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