



## voXmi and its References to the Global World

voXmi is an Austrian school network that has existed since 2009 and has been expanding ever since. Currently, 50 schools throughout Austria are active members. Primary schools, secondary schools and vocational schools are united by the goal of strengthening the plurilingualism of their pupils through a whole school approach. An exchange across different types of schools and school levels is a central element of the voXmi concept. This exchange enables teachers to look at voXmi concerns beyond the confines of their own school and to open up new perspectives for themselves.

The acronym voXmi means "learning and experiencing languages from and with each other". One of the main foci is to use digital media consciously and constructively for this purpose. The motivation for founding the network in 2009 was to contribute to a culture of peace and social cohesion in society by valuing and integrating all languages that children bring to school in a plurilingual society. voXmi schools actively counter all forms of exclusion, racism and linguisticism and make human rights an issue.

The network is coordinated by three university colleges of teacher education in the three provinces of Salzburg, Styria and Vienna and offers schools from all over Austria the opportunity for a regular exchange on good practice. Regional and nationwide network meetings contribute to this, as do peer learning formats, eLectures and in-service training programmes. One goal is to showcase good practice at voXmi schools and make it accessible to interested colleagues at other schools.

voXmi is a bottom-up initiative and thrives on the concerns of the schools. This is also the special feature of the network work: it works as long as the schools bring in active concerns and recognise an added value for themselves in the joint work. Schools consciously decide to join the network because voXmi issues are of particular concern to them and there is already language friendly practice in the school. The school nominates a voXmi coordinator or a coordinating team. For school development, this means that the voXmi network thinks together about how all staff can be involved in voXmi activities or how cooperation with the wider community can succeed. Together, concepts around plurilingualism are further developed and annual themes for school development are formulated. Last year (2020), the central themes were children's and language rights. Before that, flight and migration as well as cooperation with parents in a plurilingual school environment were common annual themes for school development at voXmi schools.

Global Citizenship Education has been in the air already for a few years in the work of voXmi schools. Some of the voXmi schools are also UNESCO schools and more research is now focusing on Global Citizenship Education at the university colleges of teacher education. The direct connection between voXmi and Global Citizenship Education is vividly illustrated by the

videos on the voXmi YouTube channel: feeling accepted in a society with everything I am and everything that makes me special is the basis for a sense of belonging and the foundation for taking responsibility for society myself. Identities can no longer be reduced to national belonging. Language is an important part of my identity, my history and the history of my family. Even more, in a global world it is important to be aware of the many perspectives and interpretations of common goals. An appreciative engagement with the world knowledge that each language carries contributes to this.

Working together in a network is an ongoing, democratic process of meeting each other at eye level, of discussing concepts and goals. voXmi has a wealth of experience in this and would like to share this experience beyond Austria's borders. We already have a first wonderful partner in the [Language Friendly Schools](#), an initiative of the Rutu Foundation for Intercultural Multilingual Education. Learning from and with each other is the comprehensive motto of voXmi. The exchange on good practice in language friendly schools is always at the centre of discussion.

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