



**Join your twinning
partner in**
*the Sustainable
Municipality Week!*



VVSG



Vlaanderen
verbeelding werkt



Belgium
partner in development



What?

Since 2018, the Association of Flemish Cities & Municipalities (VVSG) has organised the 'Sustainable Municipality Week'. More than 100 municipalities hang out an SDG flag at their town halls and celebrate local 'sustainable heroes'.

The campaign takes place annually from 18 to 25 September. That date was not chosen by chance: 25 September is the anniversary of the signing of the 2030 Agenda (in 2015) by all members of the United Nations. Around that time, worldwide attention is drawn to the SDGs. Many initiatives can be found at www.act4sdgs.org.

The Flemish Sustainable Municipality Week has already received a lot of attention at home and abroad. Local governments have an important role to play in sustainable development. To further highlight that role, we dream of **SDG flags at town halls worldwide and sustainable heroes on every town square!**



With this campaign, we aim to

- draw attention to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- highlight local sustainable initiatives.
- inspire citizens to take sustainable action themselves.





How?

- Be inspired by twinning partners who already participated together in the campaign! At the end of this publication, we share the experiences of 4 Flemish municipalities and their partners from Bolivia, South Africa, Cameroon and Senegal.
- VVSG translated several campaign materials into English, French and Spanish. [Download them for free on our website](#). The logo and website of your own municipality can be added on most materials (open in Acrobat > enter under 'more information').
- Go through the comprehensive [campaign manual](#).
- Watch [compilation videos](#) about the campaign on VVSGs YouTube channel.
- Carry out a creative action with your Flemish twinning partner during the Sustainable Municipality Week. Some tips:



Celebrate 'mirror heroes' in both municipalities. For example, organic farmers (SDG 2), women's rights advocates (SDG 5) or volunteer homework tutors (SDG 4) from both countries.



Stream a joint action live on your social media. For example, a river clean-up, a food distribution or greening a schools playground.



Take over your partner municipality's social media during the campaign week.



Challenge each other to 'SDG challenges'. Which municipality can plant the most trees in one week? Who creates the most beautiful graffiti on gender equality? Which partner collects the most used tools to repair and recycle? And so on.



Organise a virtual exhibition where both municipalities present their SDG projects.



Do a photo contest around sustainability and let residents of both municipalities participate.



On the same day, organise a sports event with a sustainability message, such as 'plogging' or running for the climate.



Set up a market in both municipalities to sell and promote local sustainable products from both municipalities.



Have a major local project (e.g. reconstruction of public space or organisation of an event) assessed by your partner municipality: To which SDGs could this project contribute more or better? Use VVSGs **SDG circle exercise.**



Sustainable Municipality Week in ...

Brasschaat & Tarija

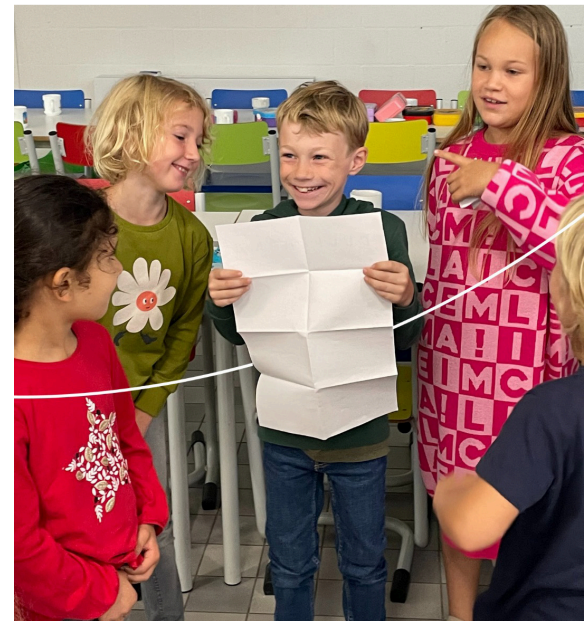
The Bolivian city of Tarija and the Flemish municipality of Brasschaat have been working together since 2004 on issues as compost, sustainable mobility, road safety and water. The SDGs have always provided a framework for the elaboration of the twinning programme. In 2022, Tarija decided to make its commitment to the 2030 Agenda more widely known locally, by organising its own 'Sustainable Municipality Week'. A broad call for sustainable heroes was launched, and more than 100 individuals and organisations were nominated. After rounds of voting by a jury of 30 people (consisting of the city council and local organisations working around the SDGs), 12 heroes were officially designated. The heroes were festively honoured in the city square. They received an SDG award, a municipal title and an SDG totebag with sustainable products. Together with the city council, they raised the SDG flag. Local artists recited a musical verse per SDG, and a poem for the heroes of Brasschaat and Tarija (the poem was published in Brasschaat in Dutch). Videos of the heroes' celebration were shared by SDG ambassadors, including the mayor, the president of the city council, local TV presenters and influencers. The celebrations were accompanied by a sustainable market and the presentation of an SDG literature prize (pupils from 7 schools could submit poems around the SDGs). On social media, Brasschaat and Tarija broadcast video footage of the raising of the SDG flag at the same time.

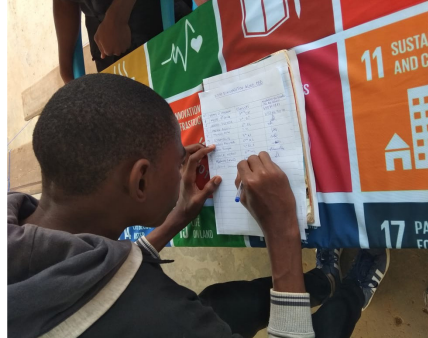


Sustainable Municipality Week in ...

Bornem & Nquthu

During Sustainable Municipality Week, wishes for a sustainable future were collected in Bornem schools and in those of their South African twinning partner Nquthu. Pupils from Nquthu and Bornem talked about the problems they saw in their schools and in the world, and they also thought of possible actions to solve them. Although the young people come from different parts of the world, they see the same world problems and have the same dreams for a sustainable world. Students are concerned about poverty and inequality in the world and worry about climate change. To contribute to solving these problems, Bornem pupils came up with the idea of cycling to school more, being more aware of waste and treating everyone equally. In Nquthu, action was quickly taken and pupils participated in a clean-up and tree-planting campaign.





Sustainable Municipality Week in ...

Brugge & Ebolowa

Bruges was inspired by its Cameroonian partner city Ebolowa to work around the SDGs in schools. In Ebolowa, 8 schools committed to a pathway around the SDGs under the name 'Clubs ODD'. They teach lessons on the SDGs and work with ambassadors who, together with a team of pupils, get to implement actions in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Bruges also decided to unite schools in the city & in neighbouring municipalities around the SDGs, with active participation of pupils and teachers. The 'SDG Generation' project was launched in 2023: schools can enter sustainable actions - on fair trade, mental well-being, local products, greening... - on a website. This way, they can win the title 'SDG Warrior' and even a musical performance at school. Both the Clubs ODD and SDG-Generation schools are making extra noise around their projects during the Sustainable Municipality Week. In Ebolowa, a youth training day on entrepreneurship for sustainable development was organised during the campaign week. In addition, a tree-planting campaign also took place and a radio debate was organised to further discuss and promote the SDGs.

Sustainable Municipality Week in ...

Sint-Niklaas & Tambacounda

In 2023, the annual theme of the campaign was education. Sint-Niklaas and its Senegalese partner Tambacounda both elected local heroes for SDG 4. Both their own heroes and those from the twinning partner were put in the spotlight at a press event. In addition, awareness-raising actions were set up in both municipalities around the SDGs. Sint-Niklaas invited its citizens to play an SDG Bingo at various local markets. City staff could attend training on the SDGs and how to apply them in their own tasks. Tambacounda did several radio broadcasts with content on the SDGs.



More info?

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About VVSG

The Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) supports, advocates for and is the umbrella association of Flemish local governments. All 300 municipalities in Flanders are members, in addition to many police zones and intermunicipal partnerships. VVSG is a house of trust that provides its members with advice and guidance, gives tailor-made information, provides training and education and other support services. More than 10,000 politicians and civil servants attend a VVSG conference or training every year.

The visuals in this publication were provided to us by the local authorities involved, unless otherwise stated.

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