

Swiss-Indian classroom

Conditions of participation 2018-2022

1 General points

The Swiss-Indian Classroom exchange programme supports partnerships between Swiss upper secondary-level schools and their Indian counterparts. It is funded by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland and run by Movetia. For an entire school year, the partner classes work together on a jointly chosen project, using an internet platform or social media to create a virtual classroom. This partnership is rounded out with real-life cultural exchange when the Swiss class visits India and the Indian class makes a return visit to Switzerland. The programme provides participating classes with the following support:

- they are matched with a suitable partner school in Switzerland;
- travel grants for initial contact visits for teachers;
- travel grants for the visit and return visit of the student groups;
- contribution to excursion costs in Switzerland.

2 Application

Interested schools from Switzerland and India register with Movetia using the application form. At this stage, they also include a letter of motivation regarding the implication their participation would have on the students and the school and how the project would be included in the school curriculum. The call for applications is aimed at Swiss and Indian schools, or individual classes, at upper secondary level in all areas of education, from academic to vocational. Groups should be composed of between 10 and 20 students aged from 16 to 20. They may be entire classes, or project groups within a given grade. There should be no more than two years' difference in age between the oldest and the youngest participant.

3 Selection

In view of the large number of applications and limited financial resources, not all applicants will receive funding. In certain cases, applications may be placed on a waiting list in case further funding is released.

Applications are evaluated according to both formal and qualitative criteria. Where the quality of the application is concerned, particular importance is attached to:

- reasons and motivation for the participation
- a clear and specific description on which skills and experiences the pupils should develop and have during the project; General goals of the participation;
- a clear and specific description of the expectations relative to the project collaboration and the visits;
- mention of the subsidies the school is ready to invest in the project (if any);
- balanced involvement on the part of the partner schools;
- how the application describes the active participation of all students in drawing up and implementing the programme;
- activities within the programme that enable close collaboration;
- the importance given to the opportunity to share experiences and to become familiar with the values and outlooks of the partner students;
- the importance given to collaboration in the description of the expectations
- a clear link between the topic of the project and the wider curriculum, as well as how the project is to be integrated into lessons.

4 Matching with partners

Schools will be matched with suitable partners based on the applications that have been received from Switzerland and India. Existing partnerships can be supported only when the participating pupils have not taken part in the former projects.

5 Contact and confirmation of the partnership

Once the two schools have been matched and they have confirmed their participation, the next step is to make contact with each other. Together, they should determine what the cornerstones of their project will be: its topic, objectives, who will lead it, and how students will work together. Having a schedule that is as precise as possible helps create clarity about how exactly exchange activities are to progress, and enables the parties themselves to identify any difficulties at an early stage. Both schools must confirm to Movetia that the partnership has been established by 31 May of the year during which the matching took place.

6 Application for financial support

The Swiss school may apply to Movetia for financial support in two stages:

1. an application for a travel grant towards initial contact visits for one Swiss and one Indian teacher;
2. an application for travel grants for the visit and return visit of the Swiss and Indian classes, as well as a contribution towards the cost of excursions in Switzerland.

The details of this support are given in the information sheet Financial Support Overview. The two partner schools are jointly responsible for ensuring that they comply with these rules. There is no legal entitlement to support.

7 Assumption of costs

The funding awarded by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland is limited to the two grants referred to above. The award of these grants does not give rise to any entitlement to have further costs paid. Travel costs will be paid only for those individuals who are directly involved in conducting the project that is being supported. No grants will be paid for persons from outside the school or for parents.

8 Responsibility and liability

The participating schools are responsible for implementing and conducting the exchange activities. The Mercator Foundation Switzerland and Movetia accept no liability for any loss or damage which might arise in connection with the exchange activities they support. This exclusion of liability applies in particular to accident, illness, theft, loss, damage to property, personal injury, and the cancellation or re-scheduling of the visit, etc.

9 Initial contact visits

An initial contact visit serves to establish contact with the partner school and to prepare the joint project. It also permits advance information to be gathered with regard to the group visit and the destination region. Funding will be provided only for those teachers who are directly responsible for the exchange project.

10 Visits and return visits

An exchange visit is first and foremost an educational opportunity. Trips that are largely tourist in nature are not supported.

10.1 Duration of stay

The visit should last for a minimum of seven and maximum of 21 days (including outward and return travel) during the partner school's academic year.

10.2 Accommodation

The students live with host families. Exchanges in which accommodation is exclusively at third locations, such as youth hostels, are not supported. In exceptional cases for which sound reasons are provided, students may be accommodated during the week at a boarding school or in student accommodation, if they then go to host families at the weekend.

10.3 Accompanying teachers

The accompanying adults must be teachers at the participating school. External accompanying adults are permitted only in exceptional cases, in consultation with Movetia.

10.4 Group size

The minimum group size is ten students and one accompanying teacher. Funding is granted for a maximum of 20 students and no more than two accompanying teachers.

11 Note on further funding

The travel grants provided under the Swiss-Indian Classroom programme will not cover all of the costs that will be incurred. Participating schools are expected to meet the shortfall themselves, by means of parental contributions, fund-raising campaigns, etc. Schools are required to disclose any third-party funding in their final accounts. Total grant support for the activities concerned (travel, excursions, etc.) may not exceed 100% of the costs actually incurred. Should funding provided by the Mercator Foundation Switzerland and Movetia exceed this amount, Movetia reserves the right to adjust or to withdraw the grant award.

12 Payment

All grant support for the Swiss-Indian Classroom project will be paid into the account of the Swiss project partner. The Swiss and Indian school must have an official school or association account to which the grant can be transferred. Bank accounts in the names of private individuals, such as the coordinator or school principal, are not permitted. 80% of the subvention will be paid in July, at the beginning of the project. The remaining 20% will be sent after the reception of the final report.

13 Visas

The schools or participants themselves are responsible for applying for the necessary entry permits. Please refer to the relevant guide for instructions on how to do this. In order to provide comprehensive notification to the local Swiss embassy, schools are required to provide Movetia with a list of participating students and accompanying teachers at an early stage.

Difficulties with visa matters cannot, generally, be ruled out. The Mercator Foundation Switzerland and Movetia offer no guarantees with regard to the grant of visas.

14 Insurance

The partner schools must ensure that they have sufficient insurance cover for the travelling group.

14.1 Insurance for the Indian school

When they apply for their visas, the Indian group will be required to provide proof of insurance. This must offer minimum cover of EUR 30,000 or USD 50,000 per person, and must cover all costs that might be incurred in the event of repatriation on medical grounds, urgent medical care and/or emergency admission to hospital. A list of recognised insurance providers is available here: https://www.vfsglobal.ch/switzerland/india/Short_Stay_Visa.html

14.2 Insurance for the Swiss school

Swiss groups should establish the extent to which insurance is the responsibility of the families concerned, and/or what costs the school is able to cover. Consideration should be given in particular to international health insurance, travel accident insurance, and travel liability insurance.

Private-sector insurance companies offer packages specifically for students and for schools.

15 Duty to notify

The Swiss school must notify Movetia immediately if there are any changes to the number of participants, the end date, the teachers responsible or the account details.

The participating Swiss schools must also notify Movetia immediately of any difficulties which may jeopardise the conduct of the project or the class visits.

16 Amendments to the project

Funding will not generally be increased should the number of participants rise or the length of stay be extended after the grant has been awarded. Grant support applies only to the partner schools stated in the application.

If the programme fails to fulfil the obligations associated with the project, or if the length of stay is shortened, Movetia reserves the right to reduce or reclaim the funding that has been awarded.

17 Preparation

The partner schools undertake to ensure that the travelling students and the host families are sufficiently well prepared. This includes, in particular, increasing awareness about the intercultural aspects of the exchange. Movetia provides a guide and other helpful information here.

18 Communication

When communicating publicly about the exchange project, the support of the Mercator Foundation Switzerland and Movetia should be made clear. Whenever possible, the logos of the two organisations should appear where their names are mentioned. Movetia should be consulted where appropriate. The full names are: "National Agency for Exchange and Mobility Movetia" and "Mercator Foundation Switzerland". For legal reasons, do not use the terms "sponsor" or "sponsorship".

19 Reporting

19.1 Final report and final accounts

Once the project is finished, a final report and final accounts are to be sent via e-Form to Movetia. Movetia also expects to receive pictures that it may use in its publications.

The final accounts for the project set the expenditure covered by the application off against the income for the project (i.e. the funding provided by Movetia, own funds, other donors, etc.). Expenditure is listed chronologically in the schedule of receipts. Original receipts that evidence the proper disbursement of project funds (e.g. invoices for travel costs, signed lists of participants, receipts for programme costs) must be retained by Movetia or the Mercator Foundation Switzerland for six years for the purposes of random audits. The final report and accounts must be submitted to Movetia not later than two months after the end of the project.

20 Reimbursement

If a project is not conducted or abandoned early, or if the funding is used for other purposes, the Swiss school is obliged to reimburse the corresponding proportion of the grant. Schools are asked not to calculate any repayments themselves. If necessary, they will receive a request for payment from Movetia.

Solothurn, 13.02.2019