

The South Africa Working Group of Helene-Lange-Schule continued the long-established exchange with partner schools in Gqeberha, South Africa, from 25 February to 17 March 2026.

This was made possible through the intensive and successful cooperation between the supporting association “Partnerschaft schafft Energie e.V.”, the South Africa Working Group of Helene-Lange-Schule, and the partner schools Sanctor High School and Willow Academy in Gqeberha, South Africa.

A central element of the exchange was the host family principle, which allowed participants to gain an authentic insight into the lives of their host families and everyday school life. The exchange meetings provided an opportunity to learn more about the culture of the respective host country and to promote mutual understanding. Another important component was the engagement with topics from the field of Education for Sustainable Development. In coordination with the partners in South Africa, the current working group is pursuing the project theme:

“A Garden in a Pot – Creative and Sustainable Gardening in Containers.”

The project topics enabled a concrete exchange of experiences regarding the cultivation of local vegetables and the local impacts of climate change. In this way, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals became tangible and meaningful for the participants. Container gardening was chosen in order to start with low-threshold solutions and to prevent irrigation from becoming the main challenge. The creative design of the containers was also intended to encourage participation and involvement from a wider group of students.

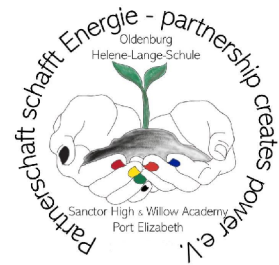
After intensive coordination with the participating teachers and schools, the following programme activities were carried out:

- Introduction to South African culture in Cape Town
- Reception at Willow Academy, classroom visits with presentations about Helene-Lange-Schule, Oldenburg, and the daily life of German students
- Reception at Sanctor High School and presentations in interested classes
- Visit to Nelson Mandela University
- Visit to the Mayor at the City Hall
- Orientation weekend at the Eco Retreat Bergrivier

Partnerschaft schafft Energie – partnership creates power e.V.

Helene-Lange-Schule
Marschweg 38
26122 Oldenburg
Email: pcp@hls-ol.de
Homepage: <https://www.hls-ol.de/pcp>

Vorstand:
Remo Jauernik, Tanja Radspieler, Christiane Pasternak



- Workshop day at Sanctor High School
- Workshop day at Willow Academy
- Visit to Missionvale Care Center
- Excursion to Addo Elephant Park
- Excursion to Grootkloof Education Center
- Lecture on the history and culture of the local Koi people
- Guided tour through the historic city centre of Gqeberha

Two particularly outstanding programme elements were the classroom visits at both schools and the project days with joint workshops organised at the schools.

In order to make the exchange project better known and to present Germany authentically, the students visited South African classes in small groups. After a short introductory presentation, the students quickly started conversations, learned their first words in Afrikaans, Xhosa, or German, and exchanged ideas about their daily lives.

The workshop days at both schools were strongly oriented towards the project theme “A Garden in a Pot”. The workshops were deliberately held in the schoolyards so that the school community could observe and participate. Through the joint work of the entire project group, other students were encouraged to help and join the discussions. At the end of each workshop day, a small creatively designed container garden with vegetables and flowers was created and equipped with drip irrigation. In addition, chili oils were produced, greeting cards were designed, and bird feeders were built from recycled water bottles.

During the first weekend of the exchange, a joint orientation weekend took place at the Eco Retreat Bergrivier. There, participants were able to get to know each other in a tent camp outside their host families and prepare for the challenges of an intercultural exchange. Sports competitions, hikes, and cooking together helped strengthen the bonds between participants.

Further programme activities showed both South African and German students possible pathways for shaping their future lives. The visit to Nelson Mandela University highlighted the importance of higher education and studying abroad and also referred to existing connections with the University of Oldenburg.

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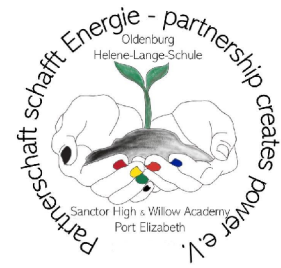
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Interkulturelles

Austauschprojekt mit Südafrika : 2025-27

Projektbericht Outgoing 2026



With a visit to the city council of Gqeberha and a meeting with Mayor Babalwa Lobishe, the participants experienced great appreciation. The mayor was impressed by the long history of the exchange and the opportunities it offers to students from public schools.

Missionvale Care Center is a donation-funded social support centre that assists people in a nearby township. The concept of the organisation was presented there. In addition to clothing and food donations, educational programmes and vocational training are offered. The concept of "Farming God's Way" was also introduced, where vegetables are grown in a large garden for the community while people are trained to apply this method in their own gardens.

The visit to Grootkloof Education Center provided insights into the indigenous Koi community and the natural environment before British settlement in the 19th century. Particularly impressive was the presentation by Chief Edmund Stuurman about the Koi community's efforts to regain their national identity and preserve their traditional culture.

A guided tour through the historic centre of Gqeberha showed the perspective of the British settler society on the settlement history and the development of the city of Port Elizabeth, now Gqeberha.

The participants experienced South Africa's wildlife during the excursion to Addo Elephant Park. The ranger clearly explained the effects of the recent rainfall and extreme heat on flora and fauna. While blooming meadows could be seen, the elephants stayed mostly in dense bush due to sufficient water sources.

During the second weekend, the organising team met with the participating teachers for a planning workshop to discuss the future of the exchange project. It was decided to maintain the existing three-year cycle and to establish an NGO in South Africa to improve coordination of the work there.

The current project cycle is scheduled to conclude with the visit of the South African group in summer 2027.

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