

### Spacebuzz wants to send 100 million kids a year to space (sort of)

adapted from an article by Davide Banis



- 1 Last December, I published an article on why — if we want to tackle today’s global challenges — we need to start thinking of planet Earth as a single entity, beyond the narrowness of national borders. We face challenges that can only be resolved with the joined effort of nations and states worldwide. When gathering information about these issues, I bumped into a freshly-launched Dutch organization called Spacebuzz that is working towards giving more people the chance to see our planet from space.
- 2 In particular, they want to help children aged 9-12 experience the so-called overview effect, a cognitive shift in awareness reported by many astronauts. They tell us that having been in outer space has made them experience our planet as a boundaryless “tiny, fragile ball of life.” Since shipping lots of children to space might get a bit complicated, Spacebuzz figured out a nifty workaround. They created an experience that combines virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology to give children a first-hand (or first-eye...) taste of the overview effect.
- 3 Sounds cool? Not cool enough for the Spacebuzz folks that decided to set up the VR/AR experience inside a real-looking space rocket mounted on a truck and use it to tour schools across Europe. I reached out to Hidde Hoogcarspel, the founder of Spacebuzz foundation. Together with Dutch investor Zoran Van Gessel, he raised a pretty penny to build the epitome of coolness — a slick space rocket on wheels. The hope is that if 100 million children will get to experience the overview effect yearly, then a generation will emerge that will be cognitively better equipped to tackle global issues such as climate change.

- 4 To guarantee that the experience will actually have a positive impact on the children's education, Dr. Max Louwerse, professor of cognitive psychology at the University of Tilburg, will supervise Spacebuzz missions' results and astronaut André Kuipers will guide the children during their missions.
  
- 5 The first Dutch astronaut, Wubbo Ockels, played a pivotal role in making Spacebuzz come together. He spent his scientific career researching how to make our life on planet Earth more sustainable for future generations. Before he died, he delivered a moving speech in which he expressed his dream to transmit the knowledge he gained as an astronaut to all the people in the world. "I had the idea to create Spacebuzz before I heard Wubbo's last speech," Hidde told me. "But when I finally listened to it, it was really a powerful confirmation: yes, this is our vision – I thought – this is the dream we want to pursue. Let's send as many kids as we can to space."

*kinder.world, 2019*