# SCHOOLS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

GUIDE FOR CARRYING OUT SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS



A useful tool for **principals and teachers** who want to integrate **Service-Learning** projects into the school curriculum

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# CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTORY NOTIONS

# I KNOW, I WANT TO KNOW

This guide has been designed to give you, the readers, the opportunity to constantly reflect on the usefulness of the Service-Learning project in your school. Use the space below to write down your first thoughts on the method of Service-Learning projects: what you know and what questions you have at the moment. This exercise helps you access your previous knowledge about the subject, on which we will build a new understanding and new questions.



## THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

A Service-Learning project is at the intersection of two needs: the student's need to learn and the need for the comunity to be supported.

**The need for learning:** through a Service-Learning project, students form and develop a whole range of skills and knowledge specific to the taught subject, but at the same time learn to be responsible and persevering, live the experience of compassion and learn how to act so that the good that they want for others comes about correctly.

**Community need:** students identify a real need of their community and propose and implement a solution that is sustainable (i.e. has a positive impact on the community).



## **EXAMPLES OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS**

A teacher reads, aloud, the story *A small seed*. Wangari Mathaai's story and helps students to formulate answers to questions such as - Who? What? Why? Where? How? etc, before going to the local park with the class, (green space). The trip is a central element of "getting to know the community". After discussing about the responsibility of taking care of green spaces, the students decide to write and illustrate a theater play in the park in front of visitors.

In chemistry class, 7th graders learn about the consequences of chemical processes on the environment and process carbon footprint data, in the form of tables and graphs, observing trends over the past 20 years. Students investigate how food is packaged in their school, how many students buy pre-packaged food (chips, croissants, juices in plastic bottles etc.), how the food included in the national "Breadroll and Milk" program is packaged, how many students bring food from home in reusable casseroles. Obviously, they also inform themselves about what happens to the packaging. They find out what the chemical composition of each type of packaging is, how long it takes to degrade and what is the impact on the environment. They create a video convincing their colleagues to give up plastic-wrapped food, convincing the management to install drinking water fountains on each floor and convincing a farm to take over leftovers from the national "Breadroll and Milk" program.

High-school students read the novel "Pădurea spânzuraților" (a Romanian novel) and discuss the effects of war on the individual, community and nation. They read articles, watch documentaries about the conflicts in the Middle East / Africa, the effects on the individual, community and nation and the reasons why milions of people decide to immigrate to Europe. Students get in touch with a NGO that works with immingrants and find out that most of them have difficulties integrating due to not knowing the language. Students start a program of "online conversations" with immigrants who want to improve their communication skills in the Romanian language.

# A DEFINITION OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-Learning projects can be defined partly through the effect they have on students. When this method is used in a structured way to connect skills (including content) with the needs of the community, the students will:

- > apply what they learn in school to help changing the community for the better
- take decisions that will have real, not hypothetical results
- develop as individuals and citizens of the community
- experience success, regardless of the level of their curent skills
- gain a better understanding of the self, the community and the society
- develop leadership, communication, team skills etc.

In a school context, Service-Learning can be defined as an **experiential teaching method through which** skills or contents addressed in the classroom are used to solve a real need of the community through a process that allows students to have initiative, to reflect on the impact they have in the community and demonstrate the newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Using the community's resources: the history, the culture, the resources and the challenges of the community can help schools develop better citizens. With the same purpose in mind, infusing the significance and relevance of these aspects in learning is useful. Instead of watering down the school curriculum, learning strategies leading to the community increase the intensity of learning and the likelihood that students will transfer their knowledge and skills to new situations. The final result? Deep, sustainable learning, after graduating and the commitment to serve, which is a life lesson.

School curricula encourage the use of these types of pedagogical approaches. In Romania, Service-Learning

projects have been successful only in the extracurricular realm. Although there are numerous reasons for this, our 20 years of experience in the educational system have shown us that deadlocks are rather related to the fears of the staff and the school management of changing classroom practice. Certainly, however, students want such a learning experience in their school. In a study conducted under the aegis of the "Community Schools" program in 2018, students were asked how to make learning relevant. They said:

- ▶ it is necessary to discuss how the theory can be transposed into practice;
- it is desirable to make the connection between what is proposed for learning and the concrete situations in the life of the community in which we live and / or to propose applications to daily life and / or discuss in order to identify applications of the discussed topics, in solving current problems and events.

# SUCCESSFUL SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

# The quality standards of a Service-Learning project:

#### 1. Supports curriculum-connected learning.

The lessons which are taught are used for the purpose of the project and students are helped to make the connection between what they have learned and how to apply it in a community context. Best case scenario, learning and service empower and reinforce each other, the curriculum being the one that guides the project. The project, in turn, helps students properly use the competences in the curriculum.

#### 2. It is anchored in the real needs of the community.

Service-Learning projects allow students to get directly and personally involved in solving problems relevant to their community. Students identify and articulate the needs of the community following an investigative approach that includes methods such as direct observation, interviews, questionnaires. This data is used by students to create a plan that will materialize in actions that are real and certainly useful to the community.

#### 3. Includes time to reflect.

Throughout the project, students are systematically guided to reflect on the effects of their actions in the community, but also on internal changes – how they think, what they feel, how they react, what they learn, how they learn etc. Aha moments, the development of critical thinking and meta-cognition on behalf of the students, require the teacher to allocate enough time to reflect on the experiences of the students.

## 4. It is guided by the voices of students.

Students need contexts where they can express their ideas and opinions and make decisions followed by consequences in authentic contexts. Service-Learning projects allow students to take initiative, make decisions, interact with community members, learn about how society works (or does not) and see their ideas transformed into reality. In the end, they are the ones who reflect and evaluate success and learn lessons.

## 5. It is completed by partnering up with the community.

The two main objectives of Service-Learning projects are changing teaching approaches and the culture of school learning, as well as strengthening community participation. In order for both objectives to succed, the project takes place outside the school and in collaboration with neighborhood or community partners. This benefits the students, who discover new places to learn, the schools which open up and the community and the partners involved.

#### 6. Progress is monitored

"Did our project matter?", "Did it make a difference?" All Service-Learning projects need to monitor and evaluate the extent to which students' community actions had a (positive) impact, but also to facilitate the extraction of lessons for the future. Students are advised to observe, to report, to calculate the effects generated by their actions, taking care to include the feedback of the community in the larger approach.

<u>Appendix 1</u> can help you analyze any Service-Learning project in terms of these standards, using your progress indicators.

# **SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT STAGES**

Think of the quality standards as the ingredients of a Service-Learning project and the stages as the recipe. The Service-Learning project involves the following stages:



#### Stage 1 – COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

The term 'community analysis' refers to the process of collecting and processing information about the community.

In this stage the students:

- visit the community, observe the problems around them, read the local press, talk to neighbors, colleagues, disadvantaged people, authorities, in order to identify community problems and needs;
- make a map of the community and an inventory of its problems, needs and resources;
- decide on the issue they are going to address.

#### Stage 2 – PREPARATION AND PLANNING OF THE PROJECT

The planning stage represents the moment when the general idea of the project acquires a well-defined outline and details will be established regarding:

- what has to be done
- when it has to be done
- how it has to be done
- what resources are needed and when
- what is the budget of the project
- who and what responsibilities they will have

- how will the project be promoted
- who are the partners who will support us through the project

#### Stage 3 – ACTION

At this stage, students are involved in carrying out the planned activities. These can take place in the presence of the teacher or in his/her absence. They can carry out activities together with partners or project beneficiaries, they can work individually or in teams.

#### Stage 4 – REFLECTION

Reflection is both a quality standard and a stage of the project, being a process that supports learning and the transfer to other contexts. During reflection, students are able to assess their abilities, develop empathy and understand the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

Usualy, the reflection stage is structured and stimulated by the teacher, before, during and after the project and adult feedback is essential for students to make sense of the experience, to observe more closely, to ask more difficult questions and to transfer what they have learned. Over time, students develop their own reflection strategies.

#### Stage 5 – DEMONSTRATION

In this stage, students make public what they have learned and what they have achieved during the service learning project. Picture exibitions, press articles, podcasts etc. will be used by students to show what they did and how they did it in the following stages: community analysis, preparation and planning, action and reflection. The presentation of the process and of the results helps them learn from each other while being aware of their own lessons, synthetizing and integrating each lived experience.

#### **BEFORE STARTING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Defining the Service-Learning project is just the beginning of this discussion. Here are a few questions we anticipate:

#### Q: How is the Service-Learning project different from other volunteering projects?

Surely you have involved students in projects or volunteering actions where they contributed to solving problems in the community. What does the Service-Learning project aditionally bring to the table?

- the voice of the students is heard: they make key decisions in the project (definition of need, choice of the solution, use of resources);
- the teacher's task is setting and evaluating learning objectives, which are defined in relation to the curriculum and action of the service for the benefit of the community;
- students regularly reflect on progress in learning and on the community impact.

#### Q: Can it be used with any students?

Service-Learning projects can be done in preschool, primary school, middle school, high school. Students of all ages and skill levels can be successfully involved and any school subject can include such a project. One goal would be for each student to be able to get involved in at least one Service-Learning project in a school

year. The method is part of a much wider range of teacher's toolbox, is also recommended in combination with other methods and approaches and suggests collaboration between school subjects.

#### Q: How can I motivate my students to get involved?

An important aspect of a Service-Learning project is the involvement of students in the whole process, from the identification of the need, to planning and action. When students can use their voice and are part of decision making, their intrinsic motivation is enhanced, as they become emotionally and intellectually involved. As students end up using their talents or developing interests that are less visible within the classroom, they achieve impressive performances. The enthusiasm of students is the first thing that the teachers who use this method notice.

#### Q: Does it mean more work for me as a teacher?

Initially, yes. As you learn and get used to the method and how you can integrate it into your own planning, it will become easier. In addition, when 2-3 teachers decide to carry out a Service-Learning project together, the time needed for collaboration and planning is added, but the results are commensurate with the effort: outstanding.

#### Q: Service-Learning means going out with students from classrooms. That means time, resources, troubles.

Yes, we don't contradict you. However, there are two aspects that deserve to be taken into account:

1. Learning is not limited to the walls of the school. It must be connected to community life and that means leaving the classroom's safe space. Otherwise, learning remains at the theoretical stage.

2. The community needs the school to be open to collaboration. There are so many resources that are waiting to be used and the need for school to become a resource is so great. But this change requires the school to be willing to open the gates from the outside to the inside and from the inside to the outside as well.

#### Q: How long does a Service-Learning project take?

As much as it takes to have a quality experience. Students need time to go through each stage of the project, make mistakes and fix it, change the project according to what they find in the community and reflect on what they have learned. The focus is on the process, not on the final result. We have many examples of "failed" projects in terms of results in the community, but which have proved to be real springboards in learning. Being in the service of the community means making progress toward a certain goal, being flexible and understanding that the classroom plan and what is happening in the community are not always in agreement.

# I KNOW, BUT I WANT TO KNOW MORE

Write down your main ideas about the Service-Learning project, which you want to remember at the end of this chapter and what questions you would like to clarify.

New information I found out about Service-Learning projects	Unclear information / What I have not found out about Service-Learning projects

# CHAPTER 2 COMMUNITY SERVICE-SCHOOL

# **REFLECTION EXERCISE**

What is under the control of the school management, teachers and community so that learning through Service-Learning projects is successful?

Think about the aspects mentioned below and write them in the appropriate column:

- 1. Teaching spaces
- 2. Changing the schedule
- 3. Ability to organize lessons outside classroom
- 4. Material and financial resources
- 5. Inclusion in other governmental strategies
- 6. Matching mission and values
- 7. Choice of learning methods

- 8. Collaboration between subjects
- 9. Annual / half yearly planning
- 10. Partnerships with economic operators
- 11. Partnerships with NGOs
- 12. Partnerships with local authorities
- 13. Parents' involvement

SCHOOL BOARD	TEACHER	COMMUNITY

## **THE SCHOOL BOARD**

#### Learning spaces

Learning spaces (whether in nature or built) shape the relationships and practices in a school, thus being an element that promotes static or dynamic lessons, competition or collaboration between students, creativity or memorizing.

In 50 minutes, during the realization of the Service-Learning projects, a class can choose to work individually, then in small groups and the closing is done in the large group. The teacher designs an audio-video material, then asks the students to work on a presentation on a flipchart sheet, so that at the end they take a tour of the materials made and ask the students to write their own reflections in notebooks. This is why well-designed learning space will be flexible and allow teachers and students to make their own decisions to make changes during class.

Although the school infrastructure is the responsibility of the mayor's office, it is expected that they will not understand why changing the parquet and benchs is not enough to create an adequate learning space. Inviting city officials to visit schools that invested in modernizing learning spaces to inspire them to include more than the bare minimum in the budget can be a good start.



#### **Outdoor classroom**

Classrooms are often too small to make any furniture changes, but the school yard, the nearby park, the community museum etc. can be excellent hosts for classes that inspire movement, collaboration and creativity.

In order for the school to make explicit its preference for learning outside the classroom, it can arrange learning spaces outside (e.g. gazebos), can make furniture from materials such as straw, logs, pallets, chairs, isoprene etc., but – most importantly – encourages teachers to explore other learning environments by making the timetable more flexible and simplifying procedures for leaving school.



## **Useful resources**

Each project has its specificities and a different need for resources. But we recommend a list that stimulates productive dialogues during Service-Learning projects:

- Flipchart and markers for face-to-face activities or an online application that allows collaborations (e.g. Padlet, Jamboard, Miro etc.)
- Colorful post-it notes to help students follow an idea or distinguish group results
- Sheets of white and colored A4 paper and cardboard
- Scissors
- Glue tape, which is usually found in the painting aisles of stores. It is extremely useful because it allows you to stick paper on the wall without damaging it.
- Stickywall is a very useful tool in a classroom because it allows gluing and peeling off sheets of paper and can be done easily with a piece of cloth (we recommend strips of at least 3 meters) and a repositionable adhesive spray.
- Access to common resources such a printer, video projector, speakers.

Include such educational resources in the school budget so that teachers can efficiently work in class.

# The budget for educational activities

If the school provides the educational resources package that the teacher needs in class, students can take over the fundraising part for the cause of the project. No matter how young the students are and no matter how poor the community is, they will be able to raise all material, financial and human resources they need in the project.

No extraordinary financial resources are needed for a Service-Learning service project (generally, Noi Orizonturi Foundation offers 100 RON/project) for several reasons:

- 1. We want to encourage students to get in touch with community members, authorities, civil society and to present their cause convincingly to them.
- Partnerships require the involvement of everybody in solving the problems identified and it is important for students to not feel that they are just "giving", but that they are also contributors to the cause.
   Fundraising is an opportunity for collaboration, a moment of maximum creativity and

effervescence in the life of the community. When students sell herbal teas picked by them from the community in a fair attended by the whole community and raise up to 400 € in one afternoon, not only are the resources needed for the cause gathered, but the school yard comes to life.

# The National Strategy for Community Action

SNAC is a Romanian educational program, a partnership meant to make the connection between mainstream and special schools, placement centers etc., - generally, institutions where underprivileged social categories are found in order to enhance interaction and social inclusion. We are sure, in your country there are similar programs with the aim of connecting the schools and the community. Is your school involved in such governmental programs?

## **Mission and values**

When you step into a school, the mission and values must be visible. Not only because you can find them written on the walls, but because they are part of the discourse of teachers and students, because parents have consciously chosen them for their children.

... It is an institution that ensures the complex development (conveying knowledge, shaping the necessary skills and abilities for the 21st century, forming attitudes, beliefs and democratic values) for all students, for their integration into an everchanging society.

Taken out of a school's vision

Sounds good. But how do these 21st century skills manifest themselves in practice? What about democratic values? What does integration mean? Service-Learning projects are practical applications of this mission. When 12th graders learn about the sensory organ of the skin in biology class and work with the Oncological Institute to hold an hour with pre-school students on how to take effective action against overexposure to the sun, the school's mission comes to life. It is no longer just a series of words, but of concrete facts.

How many opportunities are there in the school for teachers and students to reflect how their actions are in line with the mission and values of the school?

# Encouraging and supporting teachers to carry out servce-learning projects.

For most subjects, existing programs provide and encourage project-based pedagogical approaches. However, classroom practices are difficult to change, and it takes a lot of support from school management to make teachers feel encouraged to try something new.

- How much freedom do teachers feel in applying and adapting the curriculum to the classroom?
- How much pressure do teachers feel for things to "go well" or to be careful not to "trouble the water"?
- Who can teachers consult with, in order to receive advice and resources when trying new methods?
- How often and how are the efforts of teachers who do things "differently" in the classroom recognized?
- > What internal obstacles do teachers say they have? How about external ones?

Of course, every teacher has autonomy in the classroom and we expect them to feel like the decision to carry out a Service-Learning project or not, belongs to them. After all, it is a teaching method and there is no need for management approval. But Service-Learning projects mean extra effort, extra resources, extra approvals and an organizational culture that supports exploration, trial and error, transparency, close ties with the community, collaboration between teachers etc. And all this requires approval and support of the school management.

## **THE TEACHERS**

## Learning through projects

Developing an application in computer science classes, planning a garden in biolgy classes, rethinking democracy in civic education and / or history classes, creating a business plan in entrepreneurship education, creating a family tree in social education etc. - These are all examples of learning through projects that students already undertake in school.

Service-Learning projects have a lot in common with project-based learning (PBL). Both pedagogical approaches ask students to solve a real problem, invite students to explore their own interests, to ask relevant questions, to engage in surveys, research, reflections, evaluation and feedback; and to share the solutions they found with a genuine audience. A big difference is that PBL can be a simulation or a model and Service-Learning projects require direct action, planned by students.



For example, the history teacher may ask students to make an in-school exhibition that presents the history of Romani peoples' slavery. This would be an excellent example of project-based learning, but when we organize the exhibition in the community and students organize a living library with members of the Romani community, we are already talking about a Service-Learning project.

For teachers who already use project-based learning at school, it will be easy to integrate Service-Learning projects as well. The pedagogical principles are the same and teachers only need to step out the classroom to find multiple concrete and useful applications of students' projects.

However, the challenge is for the school to make the transition from a punctual action, carried out by a class teacher and to systematize this learning approach so that each student has the chance to get involved in a Service-Learning project once a year. This means that a debate at the level of the teachers can decide:

- 1. What are the students learning this year and could be enhanced with the help of a project?
- 2. What skills developed this year in school are useful to the community?
- 3. Which subjects can collaborate to create a complete experience?
- 4. What more urgent needs in the community has the school identified this year?

At the intersection of these responses is the idea of a project that is best suited for both the community and the school at the same time.

## Teaching design of Service-Learning projects (SLP)

SLP can be seen, as we specified, as a method or as a pedagogical approach. Regardless of how we look at SLP, didactic design must become a learning-oriented one. In a document prepared by the Center for Education Leadership, a method of (self) evaluation of design is proposed to us. We present this method in the following section. In evaluating the design, it is desirable to follow 5 dimensions. Each dimension includes a series of questions to help you check whether a Service-Learning project meets the requirements of a good design.

- **1 •** THE PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN
  - STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
  - CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY
  - FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
  - CLASS CULTURE AND CLIMATE

## **1. THE PURPOSE OF DESIGN**

- □ Is there a relationship between learning objectives and subject-specific knowledge/skills and student's learning needs?
- □ Is there a relationship between objectives and designed activities?
- □ What about the intellectual life of the students outside class?
- □ What about the more complex abilities, such as solving problems capacity, civism etc?
- $\Box$  Are the chosen methods useful for achieving the established objectives?
- $\Box$  Are there various possible methods?
- □ Are work tasks/activities able to develop referred skills, are they in line with the learning objectives?
- □ Are there certain modalities to help us realize if and what the students have understood from the announced goals?
- □ Are there opportunities, modalities through which students can communicate what they have understood from what they learned and the point of learning these things?
- $\Box$  Is there any acceptable evidence that students have learned?
- □ Do the subject, theme, SLP respond to student learning needs?

# **2. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

□ Is the ratio of teacher speech vs. student speech one that promotes learning?

- □ Is there any (foreseen) evidence of student involvement in the intellectual activity?
- □ Is the level of complexity and quality of intellectual work in which students are involved adequate?
- □ Do the proposed strategies and methods facilitate participation and understanding for all students?
- □ Do activities, strategies, methods encourage students to express their thoughts, develop the ideas of colleagues and evaluate the mutual understanding of the expressed ideas?

# **3. CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

- Does classroom learning reflect authentic ways of reading, writing, thinking and reasoning in the studied subject? (e.g. how does learning math reflect the way a true mathematician works and thinks?)
- □ Is there clear evidence that the teacher understands how students learn, the subject-specific ways of thinking and the subject-specific knowledge?
- □ Do the strategies, methods and teaching materials used support the acquisition and the formation of skills?
- □ Are there distinctions in terms of interest, complexity, learning needs etc, in formulating strategies, activities, tasks etc.?

## **4. FORMATIVE EVALUATION**

- □ Does the teaching process provide opportunities for all students to demonstrate that they have learned? Does the teacher capitalize on these opportunities for evaluation purposes?
- □ Does the teacher gather information about the learning process and the results of the students?
- □ How comprehensive are the data sources on which he/she relies on?
- □ Does the teacher knowing the students influence the way (s)he challenges the students to deeper thoughts?
- □ Do students use assessment data to set their own learning objectives and to measure their progress in order to increase their responsibility for their own learning?
- Does the teacher use multiple forms of assessment that provide information for the teaching process?
- Does the teacher adjust his/her teaching based on the prompt evaluation of the understandings reached by the students?

# **5. CLIMATE AND CULTURE OF THE CLASS**

□ Are the spaces of activities appropriate for the accomplishment of proposed tasks?

□ Do classroom systems and routines facilitate student accountability and learning autonomy?

- □ Do classroom systems and routines reflect community values, inclusion, equity and learning accountability?
- □ Do teacher-student and student-student relationships support or hinder the learning process?

# Including Service-Learning projects in annual planning

You can start from the curriculum (general skills, specific skills, content) and add the "Community Service" element, or you can start with a project that is already underway in your school and integrate the "Learning" element.





Annual planning, which includes the SLP as a method, requires a number of preliminary steps:

- 1. study the curriculum and identify competences / themes / topics that can be achieved through SLP or identify a need in the community and determine how it can connect to what students learn in that year;
- 2. if the SLP is applied through collaboration between teachers from different subjects, decide together what kind of competences you pursue and formulate together the descriptors, learning objectives and performance indicators
- 3. determine together the duration and period of the SLP
- 4. ask management for support in drawing up the schedule or facilitating joint activities (time / space)
- 5. develop annual planning by including the SLP to your subject
- 6. develop the design of the learning unit, together with colleagues (clearly establish the role of each teacher in the team, the evaluation criteria, methods of reflection and evaluation of learning and for the project)
- 7. identify partners and agree on all necessary elements
- 8. Inform students about the intention to use the SLP method in learning, duration and competences, descriptors, objectives.

Going through this program, did you come up with project ideas and how to connect the curriculum to a class you are teaching this year? Write your ideas here:				
CURRICUI				
		ACTION IDEAS		

# Multi-inter-transdisciplinarity and SLP

Monodisciplinarity focuses on independent objects of study, on their specific character, promoting the supremacy of formal subjects. Although the framework plans keep the mono-disciplinarity option, the curriculum of certain subjects propose inter- or even transdisciplinary approaches.

The concepts of multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity in approaching the learning process are not antagonistic, but complementary, because they have the common goal of a better understanding of reality.

The main distinction between multi- and interdisciplinarity lies in the type of relationship that is established between combined subjects: multi-disciplinarity simply brings together a series of independent subjects, which contribute jointly to the learning process, while inter-disciplinarity merges and transforms methods, generating new and improved tools, better adapted to the subject of learning. Trans-disciplinarity goes even further, aiming at a unity of knowledge beyond isolated subjects.

If you are at the beginning of your collaboration with other teachers, we recommend that you start with a multi-disciplinary project – it is easier to follow by each teacher.

# **Documentation of the SLP projects results**

In addition to planning and designing the content unit that includes SLP, teachers who use this method also have to keep track of a series a series of documents. Some are testimonials of the process, others are products of SLP.

#### Documents to be prepared for completion of the SLP

- Annual planning
- Designing the learning unit
- Filling in the form of the project
- Worksheets during the project (e.g. needs analysis questionnaire, student interests, summary, report, feedback or final evaluation questionnaires)
- Partnership contract (if applicable)
- Parental consent form (if applicable)
- Documents required from the students and which can be collected and kept as evidence of the SLP
- Student products on paper or in electronic form
- Pictures taken during the project

# THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

The involvement of economic agents, local authorities, non-governamental organisations, community members in its prosperity implies the creation of viable partnerships. As the school educates the members of the community, it must take the role of main community institution, of an organisation with initiatives that lead to partnerships and cooperation, that dynamize and develop society. The school can be the promoter of partnership programs that aim to increase the quality of life, it can propagate values such as responsibility, cooperation, participation, transparency and communication.

What brings the community closer to school is a culture of involvement, not just as potential donors, but as real partners. Here are some moments that the school can create to bring community partners closer.

#### 1. We are working with other agencies to solve community problems.

- □ From the very beginning, we plan initiatives with partners, parents and students.
- □ We take into account the experience of beginning teachers, students, parents, community organisations when designing new initiatives.
- U We share information with partners so that they can take informed decisions.
- □ The community is encouraged to participate in solving problems affecting schools.
- □ The schools eager to participate in activities initiated by other agencies where this help solve community problems.

# 2. We share leadership and work with relevant partners to develop the community for our students and their families.

□ We share the responsibility and risks of each initiative we have.

- □ We share the rewards of successful initiatives.
- $\Box$  We promote and support the actions that are allocated to our partners.

# 3. We collaborate in the decision-making process and share resources with other partner institutions and organisations to solve local problems.

- □ When possible, we create a common resource fund to support joint initiatives.
- □ When possible, we provide expertise to our staff to implement joint initiatives.
- □ When possible, we include real-life, business, or community examples in the content we teach.

#### 4. We have relevant and mutually beneficial partnership agreements with local institutions and organizations.

□ We know exactly how we will work with partnership in every initiative.

- $\Box$  It is clear to everyone which action is led by whom.
- $\Box$  We keep our promises under the terms of the partnership agreements.

#### 5. We promote the activities of other local partner institutions and organisations.

- □ We include information about our partners in the publications we produce, on the school website, in reports etc., as appropriate.
- □ We recognize and honor the contribution of our partners in advertising, reports etc.
- □ We encourage community members to participate in the activities offered by our partners.

#### 6. The community can access the facilities and expertise of our school.

- □ Our facilities are available to each group or individual regardless of class, gender, age (as appropriate), sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity or their ability to pay.
- □ We make special efforts to ease access to our facilities for individuals or groups who cannot afford to pay for facilities.

# **THE DIVISION OF ROLES**

We can reach quality SLP if we formulate exactly what role we play in the project, as well as what tasks belong to each person engaged in the project. Here is a model:

Person/institution		Role/task/responsibility
	1	introduces SLP in annual planning
	2	makes up the team of teachers from the school who collaborate in SLP
	3	designs the SLP in accordance with the curriculum of the subjects involved
	4	informs the students about the intention to use the SLP and allocated period
TEACHER	5	has several roles during SLP: facilitator, teacher, evaluator, mentor
	6	selects the best methods of reflection and the right moment for them
	7	takes responsibility, in accordance with Internal Regulations or other methodologies, for situations involving off-campus movement
	8	informs parents/requests their approval for situations involving movement outside the school premises or activities with a certain risk
	1	perform the analysis of learning and community needs
	2	participate in the planning, organisation, implementation, evaluation stage
STUDENTS	3	perform, in different forms, individual reflections or participate in reflections in teams or in the larger group
	4	participate in self- / inter-assessment of learning
	5	participate in the evaluation of SLP
		may make certain products or services
	1	provides logistical support (space, material resources, approvals, schedule changes)
		identifies potential external partners in the project
SCHOOL	3	disseminates information about the project, within the organisation and outside of it
	4	the management expresses its full support for developing the projects
	5	the management promotes student results and appreciates the value of their contribution
	1	provides logistical support (spaces, material resources, approvals)
	2	provides specialized human resource
		participates in the analysis of community needs
	4	engages, along with students, in the implementation process
COMMUNITY	5	provides feedback
	6	participates in the evaluation of learrning (of each student or group) and in the evaluation of the project
		publicly recognizes the contribution of the students to the well-being of the community.

# CHAPTER 3 MODELS OF PROJECTS

#### **IDEA BANK**

#### PRE-SCHOOL

- ▶ Visit the animal shelter or an organization that fosters animals and collect food for the animals.
- Visit the natural area near the community and investigate all life forms. Create a guide with drawings of the plants and animals that live in the area and how they can be protected.
- "Adopt" a green space and create a community garden in which to grow strawberries or herbs. You can deliver the products to an elderly home.
- Create a garden with "odd" vegetables kale, purple carrots, garden orache and cook salads during "healthy eating" workshops.
- Visit the pediatric ward of the community hospital or general practitioner and propose plans to make these spaces more child-friendly.
- Create a "food bank" in the school and collect food for the homeless.
- Make a colorful booklet "Good to know about pre-school" with pictures that explain what children who are now preparing to come to pre-scool can expect. Offer the books to the parents, in order to read them with the kids.
- Create eco-friendly items and sell them to raise money for a community cause.
- Study the books in class and see if the characters are representative of each child in the class. Write a letter to a children's book publisher and convince them to be as inclusive as possible.

#### **PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- Listen to the stories of children with disabilities and explore the school to find out if it is a good place for them. Create a plan to make the school accessible (ramps, thresholds, etc.) and present the plan to the school administration.
- Agricultural areas and parks are often the habitat of many birds. Build birdhouses and place them in the areas where they live.
- Interview the elderly in the community and collect their stories in the form of podcasts. Invite people to become "living books" in an event to explore the community's past.
- Perform a play about the "past and present" of the community. Use forgotten and authentic legends as inspiration.
- If you are in an area with natural risks (earthquakes, floods, etc.) create "envelopes" for families in which people can keep important documents safe.
- Make a compost pit and collect plant waste from the school. The resulting compost can be used for various gardening projects.
- Start an "aerobics" class for seniors led by students in the class.
- ▶ Gather valuable and old objects from the community and create a museum-room.

Collect children's books, create small summaries of them, and make them available in an open-air library.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Calculate a family's carbon footprint and then run a campaign to encourage reduction, reuse and recycling.
- Catalogue all the trees in the park in the community what species they are, how old they are, what they "saw" in their lives. Publish the stories of these trees.
- Read with children who do not go to school. The difficulty of decoding written or spoken texts stops many of them from continuing school.
- Recondition a "non-welcoming" space in the community, give it a new utility, improve it with art, etc. Turn the space into a youth hotspot with constant activities.
- Collect children's books for a school in an underprivileged area of the county.
- Conduct creative fundraising campaigns for important causes in your community.
- Make a photo exhibition of the most valuable buildings, objects, customs in the community. Pay attention to the authentic vs. tacky.
- Organize a living library with people who have been victims of violence or who have been abusers.
- Sew blankets for homeless people from recycled material.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL**

- Start a community water protection program. From sanitation, educational activities for the public, all the way to convincing public institutions to create and implement a proper management plan.
- > Help seniors in the community connect to the Internet and get in touch with family members.
- ▶ Help children (who have to learn online) connect to the internet and stay involved in learning.
- Develop a database and training program for the Local Volunteering Center to manage its volunteers.
- Work with a residential construction company to develop a strategy to improve energy consumption in the neighborhood.
- Learn from local firefighters about the risks, ways to prevent and the need to educate the public. Install smoke detectors in the homes of low-income seniors.
- Create a GPS database with the most vulnerable places in the community (floods, earthquakes etc.). Inform the town hall and the inhabitants about protection and prevention measures.
- Build a "sensory path" in the community park.
- Document the lives of immigrants in Romania, collect goods and donate them to organizations that help them.
- > Be mentors for primary school children and teach them to read and write.

# **DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS**

	DEVELOPED SKILLS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS
LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION	<ul> <li>to read, understand, analyze, evaluate a written text</li> <li>to write correctly</li> <li>to use oral language in expressing ideas, in different forms (public speaking, conference presentations, formal oral presentations with or without written presentations)</li> <li>to correctly describe and use the grammar of the language in which they communicate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>multicultural, multilingual magazine</li> <li>blog, vlog</li> <li>producing educational materials (paper or video media)</li> <li>producing documentaries on different topics</li> <li>press articles</li> <li>short stories</li> <li>presentation booklets (bilingual)</li> <li>local guide with translation service provision</li> <li>translation of informative materials for the school website, school social-media page</li> </ul>
MATHEMATICS AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS, IT	<ul> <li>to perform mathematical calculations, using any type of numbers</li> <li>to use percentages, reports</li> <li>to make and use different measurments</li> <li>to solve arithmetic or algebraic problems</li> <li>to use concepts specific to geometry</li> <li>to represent different geometric shapes</li> <li>to use different methods of data collection and analysis</li> <li>to use mathematical language in expressing predictions, evolutions, phenomena</li> <li>to create applications, different types of online pages</li> <li>to create electronic materials for a target group</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>determining the daily consumer basket</li> <li>arranging a space (painted, covered with any material etc.)</li> <li>manufacturing objects (construction of ramps, benches, small outdoor or indoor furniture for certain target groups)</li> <li>determining the budget of a project, activity, event or personal budget</li> <li>recording and processing price information for a certain category of products or services</li> </ul>
SCIENCES	<ul> <li>to use the language of biology, physics, chemistry in describing natural or artificial phenomena or processes</li> <li>to apply different principles of science in their personal life</li> <li>to identify the consequences of human behavior on the environment</li> <li>to identify and propose solutions to solve problems related to health, environment, production of goods etc.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>soil testing and observing pollution effects</li> <li>the study of a polluting element in the community</li> <li>awareness-raising campaign on various environmental, public health issues</li> <li>information campaigns on various environmental, public health issues</li> <li>greening inteventions, planting.</li> <li>health-related education</li> <li>fundraising for a specific health or environmental protection cause</li> <li>first-aid courses</li> </ul>
SOCIAL SCIENCES	<ul> <li>to know the main concepts specific to the social sciences that allow them to interpret individual or collective human behavior</li> <li>to apply the principles learned in making decisions in personal or civic life</li> <li>to be actively involved in public activities, volunteering etc.</li> <li>to participate in political decision-making, voting and other forms of political manifestation</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>magazine (paper or online support) of local and national history</li> <li>organizing campaigns and elections within the school community</li> <li>services for different disadvantaged categories</li> <li>awarness campaigns on various topics of local or national civic interest</li> <li>organizing debates or competition of debates on different topics of local interest</li> <li>information campaigns on topics of interest to the school or local community</li> <li>advocacy on a topic of interest to members of the school or local, national community</li> <li>fundraising for a specific cause of social protection</li> <li>conferences on different topics of interest to students</li> <li>computer use courses for out-of-school people (e.g. parents, elderly people)</li> </ul>

VOCATIONAL FIELD (ARTS)	<ul> <li>to describe the characteristics of different types of art or styles etc.</li> <li>to use different methods, instruments, techniques in the production of artistic materials</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>making artistic products</li> <li>organizing exhibitions</li> <li>organization of concerts, performances (theater, dance)</li> <li>writing, directing, performing plays (different types) on topics of interest to the school, local or other community</li> </ul>
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Here is an example of how a SLP can involve multidisciplinarity:



## CASE STUDY: THE ROMANI PEOPLE IN THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY

Names of teachers: Vlad Gogelescu & Adriana Balaj School: "Babel Timişoara" Middle School & TOLI

# Description of learning opportunities

At what level (s) of study and for what subjects (that you teach) do you want to carry out the project?	Intercultural education / History – 6 <sup>th</sup> grade
What are the skills/ themes/ topics you want to develop with the help of the Service- Learning projects?	Intercultural education         Specific skills         2.2. Participating, through an intercultural project, in solving community problems and promoting intercultural dialogue         3.1. Manifesting a positive attitude about themselves and others in relation to their own cultural identity and to the identity of those belonging to different cultures         3.2. Participating in solving community problems, showing cultural empathy in relationships with people from different cultures <i>Topics addressed:</i> Cultural diversity – a characteristic of contemporary society         Principles and values of the intercultural society         Deviations from the values and principles of intercultural society         Forms of intolerance (discrimination, segregation, racism, xenophobia)         Manifestations and effects of lack of solidarity (marginalization, exclusion, isolation)         Development and delivery of the intercultural education project         History         Specific skills:         3.1. Using intercultural dialogue         3.2. Description of a historical fact from the Middle Ages, using information from well-known historical sources or at first sight         4.2. Making comparisons between historical facts, using information from informal sources         Topics addressed:         Land ownership, nobility, free peasantry, serf peasantry, feudal estate;         Senior, vassal, feudal hierarchy         The Romanian society during The Middle Ages
Key competences that students practice during the Service-Learning project	<ul> <li>✓ literacy competences</li> <li>multilingual competences</li> <li>competences in science, technology, engineering and mahematics</li> <li>digital competences</li> <li>✓ personal, social and learning competences</li> <li>✓ civic competences</li> <li>entrepreneurial competences</li> <li>✓ cultural awareness and expression competences</li> </ul>
Estimated duration of the project	3 months

# Description of the project

The idea of the project	Following a visit to Traian's Square – a socio-economically underprivileged area, we noticed the living conditions of the Romani people. Moreover, Adriana Balaj is a teacher in one of the schools near the area and she was able to provide us with details about the challenges they face. So, it was important to run an awareness campaign.
Methods for analyzing community needs	Observation and interviews with members of the community and NGOs
Target group of the project	Local community near the area of Traian Square
Community partners	"Dreptul la Oraș" NGO – we worked with them on the topic of gentrification / The Embassy provided us with the location for the exhibition / project entitled "A pleca" / The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights
Preparation and planning	The preparation and planning of the project was carried out during the history and intercultural education classes and included studying the Holocaust of the Romani people and planning for the project.
Action	We organized an exhibition outside the school where we invited the public and younger students to actively participate by reflecting directly with post-it notes on the posters displayed in the hall.
Reflection methods	<ul> <li>Worksheets with questions for reflection</li> <li>I know / I want to know / I found out</li> <li>Visible Thinking (what I already knew about the Holocaust, what I just found out - something that I find interesting about the Holocaust, what I disagree with from what I've heard / my questions.)</li> <li>Think / Pair / Share</li> </ul>
Demonstration	<ul> <li>Students are asked to create a product that reflects what they have learned about the studied contents. All these were illustrated in the school.</li> <li>Babel School students chose to do, among other things: <ul> <li>Poems</li> <li>Posters</li> <li>Drawings</li> <li>Stories</li> <li>Performing a musical piece - "Romani people Dance" ("Hora Ţigănească") with piano</li> <li>Modern dance</li> <li>Personal reflections on discrimination</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Integration of learning and community service

Fill out the table that shows the link between the curriculum content, learning activities and relevant community-service activities:

#### History

#### **ACTIVITY 1**

Students watch the video about the Holocaust – <u>CrashCourse</u> and complete the Visible Thinking routine (what I already knew about the Holocaust, what new information I found out that I find interesting about the Holocaust, what I disagree with from what I heard / what questions I have).

#### **ACTIVITY 2**

Some relevant images are selected from the textbook on Jews used in schools (Poisonous Mushrooms, 1938, Ernst Hiemer) to dehumanize Jews. Students complete the above-mentioned routine in their teams, then present it to colleagues.

#### ACTIVITY 3

For a better understanding of the historical phenomenon, students are familiarized with the situation that the Romani people have had over time in Medieval and Modern Romanian Lands in particular, but also in the European space.

#### **ACTIVITY** 4

Students watch the video *The Long Slavery of Man*, then share and reflect on what they found out.

#### **ACTIVITY 5**

The students receive sheets with the following quotes: "if the peasant is serf, the gypsy is a complete slave ..., the state sells [the gypsies], the private individuals buy them and the monks are also awaiting their share".

E. Pons, From slavery to assimilation, (translated into Romanian) Ed. "AltFel" Compania, 1999, p. 16

Slavery was totally different from the other forms of servitude known at the time, for example serfdom in Transylvania, the socalled "rumânia" in Wallachia or the neighborness in Moldova. These tied the peasant to the estate without making the boyar the absolute master of the peasant: the boyar could not sell the serfs as an object, but he could do that in the case of the slave; the boyar had no right of life and death over his serfs, but he did over his slaves.

Grigore, "Romii în căutarea stimei de sine", București, UNICEF, 2007, p. 19

Slavery and its Wallachian version ("rumânia") were never confused and were not even close to each other. They were two different states. The "rumân" or the "neighbor" were considered, both, free men, compared to the slave.

C. Giurescu, Despre rumâni, 1916

The master of the slave made him work. He could sell or exchange him for other good, he could buy or bequeath it to someone, could pledge it or pay a debt through him, could imprison him, beat him, or punish him in any way, without any sort of accountability.

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N. Grigoraș, Robia în Moldova (De la întemeierea statului până la
mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea), I, în AlIAI AD Xenopol, IV (1967),
pp. 67-70
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The slave was not considered human, he was an object regarded as an animal, sold or bought, depending on the desire of his master, sometimes even used as an object of entertainment. "The gypsy is a person who depends on another person, with his fortune and family."

Organic Regulation of Wallachia, Cap. II

Students reflect and share ideas through the method Think about – work in pairs - communicate:

- What were the names of the forms of servitute in the three Romanian lands?
- What is the difference between slavery and other forms of servitute?

# **Other elements**

Opportunities for collaboration between teachers	Collaboration between the teacher of intercultural education and the history teacher with the support of the Art and English teachers in preparing the exhibition
The project's media coverage	social-media
The rough budget for the project	1200 RON + printed designs made by the art teacher in the school
Sources of funding the project	Babel School The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights
Other notes	

# CHAPTER 4 APPENDICES

# SUCCESS CRITERIA OF A PROJECT PLAN FOR SERVICE-LEARNING

	Not present	Present to some extent	Present to a large extent	Transformational
Link to curriculum	The connections between the curriculum and the service are unclear or non-existent. It is not clear what knowledge / skills can be developed through this project.	The action plan identifies some vague or potential links to the curriculum. Knowledge / skills are somehow present , but not clear. Opportunities for developing skills or content are possible, but not provided based on the plan.	The action plan clearly identifies the links to the curriculum, includeing knowledge or skills. Opportunities for acquiring skills or enhancing content as well as at least one opportunity for clear evaluation are included.	The action plan clearly, coherently and convincingly identifies links to the curriculum. It includes multiple opportunities for skill development or enhancing content and for evaluating the assessment of the acquired level. In addition, it includes interdisciplinary approaches.
Service that is relevant for the community	The purpose or impact of the service is unclear or non-existent. It is not clear how students will find out community needs or articulate solutions.	The action plan makes it somewhat likely that all students engage in a Service-Learning project, which satisfies community needs. Students will be able to describe the purpose of the project.	The action plan makes it very likely that all students engage in a service which satisfies a valid community need. Students will be involved and able to describe the purpose of the project.	The plan ensures that all students will be engaged in a service which satisfies a valid community need. Students will be personally involved and will be able to describe in concrete terms the impact of their work. Aditionally, the plan includes creative approaches to satisfying community needs.
Reflection and demonstration	The action plan does not offer opportunities for students to reflect about the learning process or the sense of public service.	The action plan offers some limited opportunities for students to reflect and demonstrate what they learned.	The plan stipulates opportunities for students to reflect in every stage of the project. There is at least one moment when students can demonstrate what they learn.	The plan states opportunities for students to reflect in all project phases. Also, the plan specified methodes that allow each student to demonstrate what (s)he learned.

The voice of the students	The plan does not include opportunities for students for exploring, planning or taking decisions concerning the plan's direction.	The plan includes very few age-appropriated opportunities, so that students engage in exploring, planning or taking decisions.	The plan brings out some student voices in an age-appropriated way and offers the students opportunities to explore community needs, to take decisions in the planning process or to demonstrate a sense of initiative and leadership throughout the service or demonstration.	The plan brings out all student voices in an age-appropriated way and offers the students opportunities to explore community needs, to take decisions in the planning process or to demonstrate a sense of initiative and leadership throughout the service or demonstration.
The coherence of the plan	The action plan lacks many necessary elements.	The action lacks some necessary requirements. There is inconsistency or contradictions which will make the plan very difficult to implement and evaluate.	The action plan includes all necessary requirements. It appears well-thought-out, sensible, coherent. All steps and targets seem realistic and connected to each other.	The action plan includes all necessary requirements and seems clear and ready to be implemented. All targets and steps appear well reasoned and realistic. I would recommend this project as a model for other schools.

# **PROJECT PLAN FOR SERVICE-LEARNING**

Name of the teacher:				
The school you will implement the project in:				
DESCRITION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES				
At what level (levels) of study and for which subjects that you are teaching do you want to develop the project?				
Which are the topics / subjects you wish to enhance learning on, with the aid of the Service- Learning project?				
Key competences practised by the students during the Service-Learning project	<ul> <li>literacy</li> <li>multilingual</li> <li>science, technology, engineering and mathematics</li> <li>digital</li> <li>personal, social and learning to learn</li> <li>civic</li> <li>entrepreneurship</li> <li>cultural awareness and expression</li> </ul>			
Approximate duration of the project				

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT		
The idea of the project		
Methods of analysis for community needs		
The target group of the project		
Potential community partners		
Preparation and planning		
Action		
Methods of reflection		
Demonstration		

# Integration between learning and community services

Fill out the table which highlights the connection between the content of the curriculum, the learning activities and the relevant community service activities:

SUBJECT AND/OR CURRICULUM CONTENT	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES / SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY
Example: <b>Biology</b>	To do research and conduct presentations about different types of plants	Planting appropriate trees / type of plants in the community
Example: <b>Romanian language</b>	To analyze types of requests and correctly draw up an official request	Official request to City Hall for approval of the specific planting area

## **Other elements**

Oportunities for collaboration between teachers	
The project's media coverage	
The rough budget of the project	
Sources of funding the project	
Other notes	

# **PROGRESS MONITORING TOOL**

#### 1. What method are you using to monitor progress?

- □ Observations
- 🗆 Interviews
- $\Box$  Questionnaires
- Others:

#### 2. Set the starting point – what is the need you are addressing?

#### 3. What visible changes have appeared?

#### 4. What evidence of changes have you collected?

#### 5. What new information did you discover during the action of the project?

#### 6. Capture the moment! Attach pictures taken during the activity

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#### www.coe.int

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