

# SCHOOLS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

## SELF-EVALUATION TOOL

HOW READY ARE WE AND  
OUR SCHOOL FOR A  
SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT?



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

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Funded  
by the European Union  
and the Council of Europe



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# Motivation behind the self-evaluation tool

By completing this questionnaire, you can find out how prepared and willing the school community is to implement Service-Learning (SL) projects. We encourage you to consult with your colleagues, students and community partners, as you complete the tool. The tool is comprehensive, but please do not feel overwhelmed – if you do not know an answer, just don't mark it. Your answers and the discussions they stimulate will help you develop a plan for sustainability of SL in your school, with a better perspective on what you are already doing and what you need to know about SL in your institution.

The first part of a tool examines three dimensions that are considered by many SL experts as key factors for institutionalisation and supporting SL in school environment. Each dimension contains several items that characterize it. For each item, a continuum in five steps of development was established. In the first stage, the school does not demonstrate any practice or experience. In the second stage, the school begins to recognize to a small extent and with minimal resources allocated, good practices in the field. The third stage is one in which the school develops and supports activities, in the fourth stage the school documents results and in the fifth stage the school has already institutionalized completely SL and good practices for its culture, politics and processes.



The second part of the tool allows analysis and establishment of directions for action throughout the school, based on the answers provided by respondents.

## Tool application process

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### Step 1 – GROUP CREATION

Service-Learning projects involve an institutional approach, not only a teacher or a class of students. Therefore, the evaluation of the necessity and opportunity of such an approach must bring to the table a diverse team of teachers, school management (principals and board), representatives of students and parents (5-10 people). The diversity of voices will bring with it a wealth of relevant information to make decisions that most will be comfortable with. This does not mean that everyone, whether they want to or not, must be part of the discussion, but honest invitations will bring honest opinions to the table.

### Step 2 – PRESENTATION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

Establishing a suitable climate for discussions and adjusting expectations of all participants in the discussion are essential for the smooth running of the meeting. So, start with a presentation of the benefits of institutionalizing pedagogical practices such as SL projects, why a discussion was needed in this working group before making the decision to participate in the training program, briefly present the questionnaire, what happens with the results and the fact that it will take about 60 minutes to go through it, discuss and complete it, then allow the participants to ask questions and express other expectations that those set by you.

### Step 3 – DISCUSSION FACILITATING

Depending on the number of participants in the discussion, divide the group into teams of 3 – 4 people and hand a copy of the questionnaire to each team. For 20 minutes the teams will read each item and give a score from 1 to 5. Then they decide based on the scores and observations noted which are the five priority directions for the school so that SL projects become an integrated practice at school's level.

*Remind the group that the purpose of participating in a self-assessment process is to help you identify areas of improvement and potential improvement strategies. There are no right or wrong answers!*

When the 20 minutes have expired, ask the team to share with whole group what they discussed. During this time, take notes on your own copy of the questionnaire and, if there were score differences between groups, mediate a conversation that brings you to a common denominator. Do not force the group to accept a certain score. Regardless of your opinion, the group should feel comfortable with the decision made.

Summarize the development directions of the school and set actions, deadlines and representatives for each. After the meeting, send a follow-up e-mail to the participants both to thank them for their involvement and to attach the completed questionnaire, together with the decisions related to the directions of action.

### Step 4 – SENDING THE INFORMATION

Fill in the [enrollment program form](#), which requests to attach this tool and the data of teachers who want to go through the online training program by October 1, 2021.

# Self-evaluation tool

## Part I

The purpose of participating in self-assessment process is to help you identify the need and opportunity to integrate Service-learning projects into the school curriculum. For this reason there are no right or wrong answers. For each question, answer in the working group on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1. does not happen / do not exist / we have no experience**
- 2. to a limited extent / we tried, but we failed / we have minimum resources**
- 3. enough / we already have something implemented, but it is possible improvements are possible/ we have some experience / resources, but we need more**
- 4. good / we have considerable resources and / or experience in this regard**
- 5. excellent / we have various experiences / sustainable implemented projects / access to many resources**

*If you do not know an answer, simply do not mark it.*

# A. About the School

*In this section we reflect on how adequate the physical space is in and around the school, and what time limitations could exist for SL respectively, but also on the opening of the institution, reflected by the mission and vision of the school, by the attitude of its leaders, to implement SL projects.*

- 1. Are there spaces in the school with flexible<sup>1</sup>, furniture, suitable for group work activities that can be used by students and their teachers? (classrooms, gym, school yard)**

<b>1</b>	We do not have spaces available with flexible furniture that can be used outside of classes
<b>2</b>	We have a space that we have been discussing for a long time that should be arranged, but nothing has materialized yet
<b>3</b>	We have a space that can be used (the arrangements have started), but the activity will be in competition with other activities and the space must be negotiated
<b>4</b>	We are already preparing the schedule to make accessible classrooms / gyms where students and teachers can meet to plan and implement projects outside of the lessons
<b>5</b>	We have enough space – classrooms / gyms, exterior space with furniture – where students and teachers, even from several classes, can also meet outside the lessons to plan and implement projects
<b>OBS.</b>	

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<sup>1</sup> The question focuses on spaces and furniture. The reason why there are not limitations can be diverse: learning in several shifts, the school being rearranged etc.

**2. Is it encouraged <sup>2</sup> to carry out the learning activities of classes or groups of students in spaces other than the classroom? (school yard, other community spaces inside or outside, closed or open)**

1	The development of learning activities in other spaces than the classroom is not encouraged / it is discouraged. We leave school only for recreation during the Scoala Altfel program or class trips depending on weather conditions
2	The development of learning activities in spaces other than the classroom is neither encouraged nor discouraged, this is not forbidden, but we do not have the habit of using space flexible. We have teachers carrying out activities outside the classrooms
3	It is encouraged the use of various learning spaces, several teachers frequently leave the classroom to develop their classes and we discuss how to capitalize other spaces too, even outside the school, so that more teachers do this
4	The school culture is conducive to the use of various learning spaces and we have available space. We have positive experiences of conducting lessons outside the school. We have (under preparation) the schedule to make accessible the space where activities can be carried out in which beneficiaries from outside the school can be involved
5	The culture of the school is marked by the choice of most relevant spaces, including outside the school. The spaces are used efficiently, in a planned way, but only when necessary and spontaneously, for various learning. The school yard has arranged spaces where students carry out various activities from work meetings to activities involving inclusive outside the school beneficiaries
OBS.	

<sup>2</sup> Example: museum, entrepreneurs, park etc.

**3. Do we have access to financial resources that could help the implementation of SL projects?**

<b>1</b>	We do not have access to funds from the school, parents or the community. In some case we received donations rather in goods
<b>2</b>	Depending on the needs set by each teacher, (s)he tries to find methods of financing projects (donations from parents, sponsors)
<b>3</b>	Fundraising is most likely a class activity. Teachers write projects, carry out fundraising activities, enter in partnerships and manage to cover the costs for completing the projects
<b>4</b>	There are conversations in the school about creating an accessible, transparent fund, to which, teachers and / or students can apply for realizing learning projects
<b>5</b>	Fundraising is a permanent activity of the school. The school allocates a budget each year for project-based learning activities. The school has established the access criteria, these are transparent and known by all and the results obtained by using of funds are promoted
<b>OBS.</b>	



**4. Does the school have partnerships with special schools, homes and placement institutions, as part of the National Strategy for Community Action (MECT Ordinance no. 3477/2012)?**

<b>1</b>	We have never had such partnerships, we are not included in SNAC
<b>2</b>	We have had a partnership within SNAC in the past, but it has expired and it has not been renewed
<b>3</b>	The school has a partnership agreement, but the activities are not carried out as in the past
<b>4</b>	The school has a stable and functional partnership with an institution where there are underprivileged people and we have started discussion to expand the activities beyond the occasion of the holidays (Christmas, Easter etc)
<b>5</b>	We have a stable and functional partnership with several institutions in which there are underprivileged people, with whom our students have carrying out support activities regularly, for several years (e.g. monthly)
<b>OBS.</b>	

**5. Does the school's mission and vision encourage experiential learning and community involvement?**

<b>1</b>	The mission and vision of the school are displayed in the main lobby of the central building and include the terms learning and community
<b>2</b>	The mission and vision of the school, which include the terms learning and community, was formulated by a team of teachers who, generally, support experiential learning and community involvement
<b>3</b>	The mission and vision of the school encourage experiential learning and community involvement. The meanings of the key notions were discussed with the students in classes with their headmasters (with emphasis on the way they understand and observe the concrete manifestations of the key notions)
<b>4</b>	The mission and vision of the school encourage experiential learning and community involvement. We are in the process of systematically transposing the principles into practice
<b>5</b>	The mission and vision of the school, which were been agreed to by the school community, explicitly encourages community learning and involvement. Key notions are promoted consistently and are reflected throughout the school's culture and practices
<b>OBS.</b>	

**6. The leadership of the school encourages and supports teachers to carry out Service-learning projects / learning through projects.**

<b>1</b>	The leadership of the school encourages teachers to use modern learning approaches
<b>2</b>	The leadership of the school encourages teachers to use project-based learning, disseminating information about good practice
<b>3</b>	The leadership of the school encourages and occasionally supports teachers in using project-based learning with resources attracted through various projects
<b>4</b>	The leadership of the school encourages and support all teachers to carry out service-learning / project-based learning projects, indicating suitable partners for certain subjects / educational cycles and potential sources of fundraising
<b>5</b>	The leadership of the school systematically encourages and supports teachers to carry out service-learning / project-based learning projects, creating the context in which teachers prepare these approaches together and allocating the necessary resources to project-based learning (including community service projects)
<b>OBS.</b>	

## B. Staff / Teachers

*In this section we reflect on project-based learning, how often it is used and the availability of teachers to use it. At the same time, we try to find out how open teachers are to the uncertainty of the impact of SL projects and how willing they are to allocate overtime in this regard.*

### 1. To what extent do we use methods such as project-based learning in our school?

1	We do not know because we are not sure exactly what project-based learning requires
2	We have one or two colleagues who documented themselves about learning through project, we heard from some of them that they tried to apply, without having details
3	We have several colleagues who use or have used learning through project, in optional subjects or extracurricular and they told us about their experiences and projects results
4	We have several colleagues who use project-based learning and at least one of them used it in a core curriculum and told us about the experience and project results
5	We choose project-based learning as the most efficient way to develop skills and we use this approach systematically
OBS.	

## 2. To what extent do we offer leadership opportunities to students?

*(For example, the students are encouraged to take initiative, have the opportunity to choose the tasks to be performed, their role in teamwork, the method of implementation, the way they demonstrate learning, etc.)*

<b>1</b>	We offered students some opportunities and options, but we did not get the expected impact, because they are not used to have initiative
<b>2</b>	Occasionally, we offered the opportunity to practice leadership to the students, but probably with insufficient support for a full experience, so that only few students show initiative
<b>3</b>	There are attempts by teachers and now we are thinking about how to institutionalize a framework for the manifestation of student leadership, for now, in the extracurricular
<b>4</b>	We pilot the institutionalisation of a coherent framework of students' leadership, especially in the optional subjects, at the Scoala Altfel program and in the extracurricular
<b>5</b>	We have a well-established framework for demonstrating student leadership. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning initiative / play an important role in project implementation / can choose tasks / choose how to implement / choose how they demonstrate learning in most school subjects
<b>OBS.</b>	

**3. How accustomed are we to the uncertainty brought about by learning through the project?**

<b>1</b>	Some teachers are willing to let students make mistakes and learn from mistakes, but parents do not encourage this. The school leadership is tolerant of these teachers, without explicitly supporting and promoting this type of learning approach
<b>2</b>	Many teachers are willing to let students make mistakes and learn from mistakes, but this usually happens during extracurricular activities or Şcoala Altfel program when we are not pressed for formal assessment
<b>3</b>	We are thinking about how to prepare teachers and students to manage the uncertainty inherent in project-based learning, including core subjects
<b>4</b>	Many teachers have the experience of uncertainty inherent in project-based learning and they know how to exploit mistakes by turning them into important learning moments, including core curriculum subjects
<b>5</b>	We have become accustomed to the uncertainty brought by project-based learning and we know that there are chances that students will not be able to produce results independently, but through reflection we turn mistakes into important moments of learning
<b>OBS.</b>	

**4. How willing are we to interpret school curricula with colleagues, going beyond the simple focus on content?**

<b>1</b>	Each teacher is free and responsible to interpret their syllabus in the class they teach
<b>2</b>	We had a meeting to discuss programs with teachers from several subjects in the same curricular area and we agreed on some common points
<b>3</b>	We had a meeting to discuss programs with teachers from several subjects in different curricular areas and we agreed on some common points
<b>4</b>	We have semi-annual working meetings to discuss the programs with the class teacher council and at least once we tried to harmonize our learning approaches at the level of several school subjects in order to offer students coherent projects
<b>5</b>	We interpret school curricula together and design a coherent learning path to provide students with relevant, experiential learning (practical applications common to several subjects)
<b>OBS.</b>	

**5. To what extent do we support students to transfer what they have learned in the classroom to solve a problem in the community?**

<b>1</b>	We praise / reward / highlight students who are volunteering in the community and support various initiatives (social / environmental / educational / health etc.)
<b>2</b>	We support volunteering, making the connection between what is learned in class and real life. We explain to students the practical applicability of the contents, the learned ideas
<b>3</b>	We always make the connection between what we learn in class and real life. We are thinking about how to institutionalize learning contexts through which students contribute to solving problems in the community, developing their skills in the curriculum. We tested this approach in Școala Altfel program and extracurricular contexts
<b>4</b>	We pilot the institutionalisation of learning contexts through which students contribute to solving problems in the community, developing their skills in the curriculum
<b>5</b>	We develop and evaluate curriculum competencies in authentic learning contexts, helping to solve community problems
<b>OBS.</b>	



**6. The completion of Service-learning projects at school level involves collaboration between teachers, with partners outside the school, trips to the community with students to implement project actions. To what extent are we willing to devote the necessary time and effort to these actions?**

1	Some teachers in the school are willing to devote time and effort, but we do not have coordination to implement learning projects
2	Most teachers are willing to devote time and effort, just to test for the moment the collaboration within the teaching staff, with a partner outside the school, possibly including community trips with students to implement the actions of a learning project.
3	We have a plan through which teachers learn how to manage the time and effort needed to plan and carry out a Service-learning project. We have assigned a coordinator for learning projects
4	We have positive experiences in which the teaching staff has planned, coordinated and carried out various learning projects. We still need to streamline these efforts
5	We are fully aware of the time and effort required to carry out learning projects at school level and this approach to learning is institutionalized in the school. Therefore, there is no question of availability. We have the necessary coordination, secure resources and efforts harmonized throughout the whole school
OBS.	

# C. Community Conditions

*In this section we try to find out if the school has developed partnerships in the community with potential beneficiaries and / or with organisations / institutions willing to collaborate or sponsor community actions and how used stakeholders (teachers, students, parents) are to participating in community projects.*

**1. Do we have partners to collaborate in the implementation of projects (NGOs, associations, town hall etc.)?**

<b>1</b>	We have signed punctual partnership agreements, but the partnership is a general one. The City Hall always responds to the invitation of our school and is also represented in the Board of Directors
<b>2</b>	We have partners. For example, some teachers work with one or more NGOs. Local or county public institutions respond favorable to the school's invitation
<b>3</b>	The school has experience of several successful partnership with NGOs and public institutions, groups of beneficiaries of our projects. We have begun to think more strategically about these partnerships
<b>4</b>	We have experience of successfully implementing a first stage in the school partnership development strategy. We still need to streamline the operation of these partnerships
<b>5</b>	We have well-established strategic partnership with partners with whom we share the same values, with whom we think and implement community SL projects together
<b>OBS.</b>	

## 2. To what extent have we involved the community in school volunteering or SL projects?

1	We invited people from outside school in some voluntary actions (for example, during the Școala Altfel program people outside school held various workshops for students)
2	Depending on the requirements of a partner / funder, we recruited volunteers from the community, for a project benefiting the school
3	We have established a need for volunteers according to the school's development strategy and we have a plan to recruit and coordinate their involvement
4	We tested one or two actions in the school strategy with the involvement of volunteers and we have very good lessons to coordinate these resources more effectively
5	Volunteering is a defining value practice of our school culture. We have a clear procedure for regular recruitment of volunteers for different roles in school projects, we successfully coordinate human outside school resources
OBS.	

**3. To what extent do we manage to involve the parents of the students in our school to support us in the implementation of SL projects?**

<b>1</b>	Some teachers in the school manage to involve 3-4 parents in the class, at annual events such as class celebrations or festivities
<b>2</b>	Most teachers in the school manage to involve several parents in each class at annual events such as class celebrations, festivities, the Școala Altfel program, and some have tried to involve them in learning projects
<b>3</b>	We are developing a strategy to increase parental involvement, including in support of SL projects. We need to learn how to communicate effectively with all parents about project-based learning and school service-learning projects
<b>4</b>	We have started implementing the strategy of involving parents, we have succeeded and we have some lessons learned on how to effectively attract them in school initiatives
<b>5</b>	Enhancing parental involvement in support of learning projects is a goal we are constantly pursuing. We manage to regularly and sustainably involve parents from each class, identifying with them appropriate roles and responsibilities
<b>OBS.</b>	

# Part II

## What is next? Creating an action plan

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Remember that the purpose of this self-assessment process is to provide you with useful information that can guide the school in creating a fertile environment for the implementation of experiential and integrative methods such as Service-Learning projects. To make the switch from information to action, use this section to describe the plan for the 2021-2022 school year.

### The strengths of the school community:

1	
2	
3	

### Areas to improve the school community:

1	
2	
3	

## Actions needed to improve the fields identified as deficient

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### Priority action #1

What?	
By whom and until when?	
How will we evaluate the success?	

### Priority action #2

What?	
By whom and until when?	
How will we evaluate the success?	

### Resources

<b>INTERNAL</b> <i>e.g. other teachers, parents etc.</i>	
<b>EXTERNAL</b> <i>e.g. NGOs, inspectorate etc.</i>	

## Notes and observations

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“Community service training - a whole school approach for social change” is financed through the joint program EU/CoE “Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO)”

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