



Story of a network weaving experience

Management report on the program for the
“Promotion of Service-Learning in Central
and Eastern Europe 2016-2022”

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"In our organization, we strive to use gender-neutral language which does not reproduce any discriminatory patterns between men and women".

Based on UNESCO. The State of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: Guaranteeing Quality Education for All. UNESCO. Santiago de Chile, August 2008.



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Introduction

Even though we are children, we feel like adults because it's a lot of work and it's basically almost student-led. I learn how to be a leader not only by leading others but also by understanding their needs.

(Student of Transylvania College, Romania)

CLAYSS, which stands for Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario, or Latin American Centre for Solidarity Service-Learning, promotes service-learning as an innovative pedagogy that uses a holistic approach to encourage the development of relevant competencies. This is a response to both the educational challenges of the 21st century and the needs of local communities.

The mission of CLAYSS is to recognize and enhance comprehension of local particularities to build more democratic, just and egalitarian societies. CLAYSS was created to support students, educators and community organisations in the development of solidarity educational or service-learning projects. The latter is an opportunity for children and young adults to apply what they learn in service of their communities while learning throughout the process. Participating in these types of activities outside of the classroom allows them to simultaneously acquire new knowledge, explore new topics, and develop skills for life, work, and civic participation. This innovative pedagogy, spread worldwide, improves both educational quality and local development.

In this document, CLAYSS presents the approach and work strategy adopted in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region between 2016 and 2022. It is divided into three sections. The first introduces the main features of the programme. The second explains the Solidarity Service-Learning (SSL) pedagogy approach and the working strategy implemented by CLAYSS. The third section presents the activities and how each of them created different types of value. Finally, the last part, as a way of closing and conclusion, explains the dynamics of the programme mobilised by CLAYSS for the promotion of SSL in the region.

1. The programme

In November 2015, CLAYSS was invited to Vienna to meet with educators from different countries in Central and Eastern Europe and discuss service-learning (SL)¹ and its progress in Latin America. Several participants shared their experience of SL in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), and all were enthusiastic about implementing it and promoting it in schools, universities and civil society organisations. The lively dialogue that took place was the starting point for a joint effort to promote this pedagogy in the CEE region.

The programme *Promotion of service-learning in Eastern European educational institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations* was an initiative of CLAYSS which ran from 2016 to 2022 in three overlapping grant periods:

- March 2016 to August 2017
- May 2017 to September 2019
- January 2019 to September 2021 (extended to 2022 due to the pandemic)

Although each period had specific objectives, was subject to evaluation and had adjustments for the following phase, this report will consider the strategy, the activities and value creation in global terms, as part of the same process.

The main purpose was to promote SL in Central and Eastern European educational institutions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) by engaging their participation and cooperation in the process. The activities were co-designed with the regional partners, aiming at educators, CSOs leaders, public officers in the education sector, and students involved in service-learning projects.

1 Service-learning (SL) and Solidarity Service-Learning (SSL) are used in this document, to read about the particularities of each one, which were an important part of the described programme, please resort to Regina, Carla. *Service-learning in Central and Eastern Europe handbook for engaged teachers and students*. https://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-EE_nov17.pdf



2. The framework

This section explains the theoretical framework that underlies the proposal and design of the programme. We first present the characteristics of SSL and the initial impressions of representatives of educational institutions and organisations at the beginning of the activities.

We then explain the strategy proposed and implemented by CLAYSS to support the rooting and growth of SSL in the region.

Thirdly, the framework is completed with a proposal to identify the value creation of the programme’s activities.

2.1. Service-learning: reasons, hopes and willingness to be part of the change

Service-learning is an innovative pedagogy that promotes solidarity activities led by students linked to the curriculum. Knowledge is applied to solving a community’s concrete problems and needs. Service-learning projects contribute to local development, improve the quality of academic learning, develop proper skills to increase employability, and promote values education and responsible citizenship participation all at once.

Research has proven the positive impact of these kinds of initiatives on the education of children and youth,² showing:

Improvement of academic performance, according to grades and objective assessments.

- Higher awareness of ethics and social issues.
- The development of prosocial behaviour.
- The development of marketable skills.
- Increased resilience.
- Higher camaraderie within schools.
- Lower rate of truancy, repeated years, and dropout.
- The inclusion of students from more vulnerable populations.

CLAYSS’ work in Latin America showed it is also a useful tool for peace education and cultural change.³

Service-learning pedagogy promotes:

- *Comprehensive, inclusive and quality education*: Projects integrate academic excellence, community engagement, science, citizenship and values education, with the inclusion of diversity in education.
- *Initiatives aimed at meeting the real needs of a community*: solidarity service activities are intended to collaborate effectively in solving real community challenges. In transformative action, the beneficiaries play an active role.

2 A summary of this research can be found in the works of Furco (2005), Furco & Root (2010), Billig (2004; 2006), Tapia (2006), IARSLCE (2014) and RIDAS (2015).

3 EDUCAPAZ, the National Education for Peace Programme, is an alliance of civil society organisations working for Popular Rural Education and Crese Education (citizen education for reconciliation and social-emotional) aimed at Colombian educational communities affected by the armed conflict. CLAYSS is an ally in this programme, taking to the educational institutions the pedagogy of Service-Learning as a school strategy that collaborates in overcoming the differences that have divided the people of Colombia for many years.

- Students are the central protagonists *in the planning, development and assessment of the project*: Student participation at all stages of the project is key to the development of meaningful learning.
- *Integration of learning contents, community service and the development of students’ competencies*: There are clear, intentional ties between practice in service of the community and the content of the curricula. Students approach social issues and develop competencies to participate actively and autonomously in contemporary societies.

In other words, in SSL experiences, students develop projects agreed upon with a community in order to work together to improve a problem or situation.

In so doing, they acquire specific, interdisciplinary and holistic knowledge, develop competencies, learn to think with others, become entrepreneurs, organise themselves and act for the common good in a situated way. In experiential learning and the practice of service, students are co-protagonists of committed, peaceful, active and civic social intervention.

In this way, through SSL, educational institutions can effectively link with their communities of reference and generate real opportunities for an inclusive education connected to their time, in line with the educational standards of the European Union:⁴

Service learning and community engagement soften the walls between classroom and community, challenge students’ assumptions, and connect them with broader systems, processes, and experiences beyond their own experiences. It is vital that students approach service with a spirit of humility, free of paternalism, especially in connection with those who may face different material challenges. Service learning must not be a pursuit limited to the most privileged; all learners can contribute to a dialogical process of advancing well-being within their communities. Service learning has the potential to enlist solidarity as a central principle to problem-solving pedagogies, rather than favouring the solutions which are simply the most expedient or self-interested. (UNESCO, 2021, pg. 52)

Community-engaged pedagogies and service learning can imbue learning with a strong sense of purpose when undertaken in a humble posture of learning. A significant reworking of the organization of schooling is necessary to fully enable pedagogies like these to advance students’ abilities to undertake joint work and expand our capacities for collective deliberation and action in a spirit of solidarity. (UNESCO, 2021, pg. 99)

The fundamental question before starting the project was: can solidarity service-learning contribute to the educational and social transformation that individuals, institutions and organisations in Central and Eastern Europe aspire to?

In a region such as Central and Eastern Europe, affected by situations of exclusion and a long history of dispute and war, education is a powerful tool for change, as seen in Latin America and around the world. Providing inclusive, quality, holistic education is key not only to sustainable development but also to reversing the cycle of violent conflict, as pointed out by UNESCO (2011):

Reconstructing education—seizing the peace premium, post-conflict reconstruction in education poses immense challenges. Yet success in education can help build government legitimacy and set societies on course for a more peaceful future.... Build on community initiatives: In many conflict-affected countries, communities have stepped into the vacuum created by the failure of

4 Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’) https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/education_benchmarks_2020.pdf
Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48584/st06289-re01-en21.pdf>

governments to maintain education. Supporting community efforts can deliver quick results for education and demonstrate that government is starting to work.

CLAYSS strives to comprehend and address regional distinct aspirations aiming to contribute to the development of democratic societies committed to social justice. As a Latin American organisation, CLAYSS is aware of the dangers of well-intending foreign agencies and consultants who seek to give by advice imposing their own models. Therefore, CLAYSS recognizes the commonalities that facilitate closer cultural approximation while acknowledging the differences that prevail in other regions and seeks to establish reciprocal pathways of dialogue and cooperation while co-designing, implementing and evaluating together with local partners.

In this sense, people from the region have said that the model proposed by CLAYSS generates much interest because it does not propose a specific device but opens an opportunity to put its concepts in dialogue with each local culture. The term solidarity, one of CLAYSS’ key concepts, is understood completely differently in Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe, and also in different places within it, so a big part of CLAYSS’ work has to do with generating spaces for exchange and discussion within the region on the meaning of service, community development, inclusive education and such. It has been openly said that they prefer CLAYSS’ model to others which are more prescriptive and less open to adaptation to local characteristics and needs. They all have valued the horizontal dialogue, as opposed to what often happens with other “top to bottom” donors and the technical assistance they have experienced.

Some challenges and questions faced for joint construction in the region:

- A local history of conflicts tackled/approached in violent manners,
- Diversity of languages, culture and religions throughout the region,
- What makes them a region, do they feel like one or want to be one?
- How to promote educational innovation in a conservative, structured context,
- How to suggest civic and youth participation in a context so very marked by hierarchy and suspicion.

In the previously mentioned meeting in Vienna, educators and NGO leaders from the region underlined the importance of educating for active citizenship, promoting youth initiative and social entrepreneurship toward the strengthening of the region. They also valued SL as “the right tool” to face and intervene in the social context, considering it as a way to promote joint work among students, peace education, as well as the development of skills related to employability. At the same time, they were concerned about what they needed to learn because “CLAYSS’ service-learning proposal seems very useful for us because it has proved to be useful before. But, are we learning what we need to learn to meet the needs of our people? We need positive concrete examples” (a representative of an educational non-profit organisation from Bosnia- Herzegovina).

SSL started to appear as a concrete opportunity for joint work within the region, for people from different countries and cultural backgrounds to work together for common good:

It’s a unique opportunity for me, a Serbian, to work together with a Bosnian educator peacefully and make good things together. It’s rare to be able to speak with someone from the other side in this harmonic way (A university professor from Serbia).

The arguments, the research provided, the good practices and the concrete service-learning experiences showcased activated the hopes of the participants of that first meeting. Being part of an educational and social change was an aspiration and also a necessity since people want to see something positive that they can anchor to (A university professor from Serbia).

2.2. The strategy: capacity building and networking to support and sustain service-learning rooting and growing in the CEE region

In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created a new way to conceive and measure progress. Instead of using growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the sole measure of development, it ranked the world’s countries by their human development, by whether people in each country have the freedom and opportunity to live the lives they value.

Since then, in a dynamic world and through varying life conditions, human development has been about more than just satisfying basic needs. It encompasses voice and autonomy, collective and individual capabilities, diversity and inclusion. From the United Nations perspective, human development is about agency, self-determination and the freedom to make choices and shape outcomes (UNDP, 2016, 2020).

In line with this perspective, in CLAYSS’ work, capacity building (Sen, 1979, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011; UNDP, 1990, 2016, 2020; Cottam, 2020) and networking constitute the cornerstone of SSL programmes and advocacy activities and, ultimately, systemic change.

On the one hand, this programme has focused on the capacities to learn and relate, understanding that the recipients of the activities are also agents of the process. Their action or agency is stimulated and promoted, both individually and collectively, to expand service-learning in the terms they consider appropriate for their region and country, to give sustainability to the actions and advance towards profound transformations.

On the other hand, the programme stimulates the creation and participation in thematic and territorial networks since, in the experience of CLAYSS,

diversity and working with others are the best way to develop service-learning and thus transform reality. We understand that getting to know each other and discovering ourselves thanks to joint work enhances our work and increases its impact. That is why we support the development of more national and regional service-learning networks and are also part of networks that promote it worldwide.

(Nieves Tapia, Director of CLAYSS, Argentina)

Connecting to networks and networking is crucial at a personal level to learn, exchange experiences, be part of the flow of information, and give and receive help. In this type of connection, Wenger, Trayner & de Laat (2011) identify value creation:

The connections in a network can function as learning ties providing access to information flows and exchanges.... The learning value of a network derives from access to a rich web of information sources offering multiple perspectives and dialogues, responses to queries, and help from others—whether this access is initiated by the learner or by others. On the one hand, because of personal connections, networking helps target access to learning resources—whether one sends an email query to a friend or decides to follow someone’s Twitter feed. On the other hand, because information flows, it can be picked up, interpreted, and propagated in unexpected ways. Information traverse networks with a high level of spontaneity and unpredictability. This potential for spontaneous connections and serendipity—and the resulting potential for collective exploration without collective intention or design—is a key aspect of the value of networks for learning.

At another level, for CLAYSS, connecting and networking have strategic value when there is a shared purpose. People and institutions that intentionally work together to

expand knowledge, practices and SSL projects create powerful movements. In times of change, networks sustain them, and in turn, they strengthen them with common projects and action. Concretion and communication enhance growth and help gain political support, sustainability, funding, among others.

Developing relationships with and among local partners played a key role in this programme. Knowing that sustaining relationships takes knowledge, practice, time and experience, part of our task was to facilitate and promote a sense of reciprocity, a meeting of equals.

(Luz Avruj and Candelaria Ferrara, CLAYSS’ coordinators for the CEE Programme, Argentina)

In designing the strategy for the implementation of programmes of this type, the focus on relationship development understood as a type of capacity is essential. According to Cottam (2020):

The capability to build and sustain relationships, core to a flourishing existence, is complicated in times of upheaval.... Relationships play a unique and foundational role. Looking at the world through the lens of relationships provokes a particular way of thinking and being that is at the root of social change. Relationships are the opposite of transactions. They require a sense of reciprocity, a meeting of equals.... Thinking relationally inspires a different institutional design—inherently questioning what spaces are required, what is the order in which we might approach each other and what forms of listening, talking and making together build the trust that all relationships embody.

The programme, through the creation and strengthening of the Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network, brought together institutions of all educational levels and civil society organisations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, with the participation of Croatia and North Macedonia among other countries. CLAYSS, with the support of a generous donor from the region, developed the programme with the institutions and organisations mentioned in the following outline.

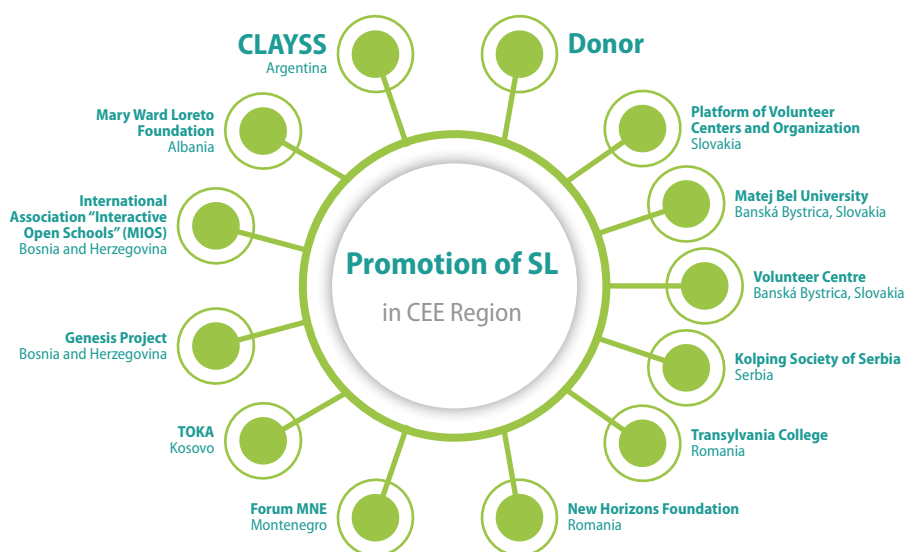


Figure 1. Partners in the CEE region

Three pillars of the strategy guided the planning and design of the activities:

- To build capacity in the region by training, institutional support and joint projects as well as adaptation and creation of courses and bibliography from and for the region.
- To establish cooperative and horizontal relationships among Central and Eastern European SL Network, CLAYSS and the Ibero-American SL Network.
- To develop a critical mass of educators, leaders of NGOs and public officers specialised in the subject that sustain and expand service-learning initiatives and institutionalisation at a regional level to leverage systemic changes.

In line with the principles that characterise SL projects, the programme had a participatory operating rationale, in collaborative networks, connected to local culture and challenges, in order to develop the capacities of actors, institutions, organisations and educational systems in the region. This approach was key to the process of rooting and growing. In other words, it was not a fixed plan transferred to another context for its application, but a proposal for co-creation based on a set of dynamics and activities of a work programme.

2.3. Value creation from programme activities

The programme carried out a set of activities with one outcome in mind: to leave installed and sustainable capacities in the region to promote systemic changes through the SSL expansion. Focus was placed simultaneously on this outcome as well as on the process of network development based on shared purposes. According to Olson and Brennan (2017):

Purposeful interaction and communication between people leads to the development of weak and strong ties, which allow for information to be shared, resources to be identified, and action to be organized. [This type of development] represents the creation and strengthening of relationships and networks for both present and future action... enables the whole (i.e. a coordinated group of locally active participants) to become greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. individuals or groups acting alone, potentially at odds with each other).

In other words, networks and communities create value when people are involved in activities, such as sharing information, tips and documents, learning from each other's experience, helping each other with challenges, creating knowledge together, keeping up with the field, stimulating change, and offering new types of professional development opportunities. This report will use the definitions of the types of value creation proposed by Wenger, Trayner and de Laat (2011) and Wenger-Trainer (2014) to inform the process developed in the programme. According to the authors, there are different types of value creation:

Immediate value (Benefits of participating in activities)

Activities and interactions can produce value in and of themselves. They can be fun and inspiring. One can get an answer to a question, a solution to a problem, or help with a challenge. Collective reflection can trigger out of the box thinking and open new perspectives. Participants can cooperate on seeking innovative approaches. Just hearing someone else's story can open one's imagination or reveal a new perspective.

Potential value (Insights, ideas, methods, skills, documents, relationships, resolutions, action plans)

Activities and interactions can produce “knowledge capital” whose value lies in its potential to be realised later. This can take the form of a useful skill, a key piece of information, a new perspective, social relations and connections, the reputation of the network, or the recognition of the strategic relevance of the domain that

can lead to potential opportunities for collaboration and the ability to promote a cause.

Applied value (Plans into practice, implementation of resolutions, inspirations that changes practice)

Knowledge capital is a potential value, which may or may not be put into use. Leveraging capital requires adapting and applying it to a specific situation. For instance, reusing a lesson plan, changing a procedure, implementing an idea. Adapting and applying knowledge capital in different contexts can lead to changes or innovations in actions, practice, tools, approaches, or organisational systems.

Realised value (Creating a change)

New practices or tools are not enough, even when applied. It is important to identify improvements in achieving what matters to stakeholders, including members implementing a new practice.

Transformative value: Is achieved when the actions cause a reconsideration of the learning imperatives and the criteria by which success is defined. This includes reframing strategies, goals, as well as values. It can also include proposing new metrics for performance that reflect the new definition of success. This redefinition of success can happen at individual, collective, and organisational levels.

In the implementation of a programme such as this, knowledge and value are also produced regarding the programme itself:

Strategic value (Strategic vision and conversations among all partners)

Refers to the clarity of the strategic context in which the network is operating and the ability of the network to engage in strategic conversations about the value it creates. This is crucial because knowledge and learning are often seen as operational challenges when in fact they are primarily strategic issues.

Enabling value (Building capacity for sustaining learning)

Refers to the support processes that make the network’s life possible. It includes internal leadership as well as external support, such as a dynamic support team, logistical support, and good technology. It is important because it is a sign of sustainable activities and results for the network.

Capacity Building and Networking: Value Creation

Purposeful interaction, communication and relationship to develop community/network agency

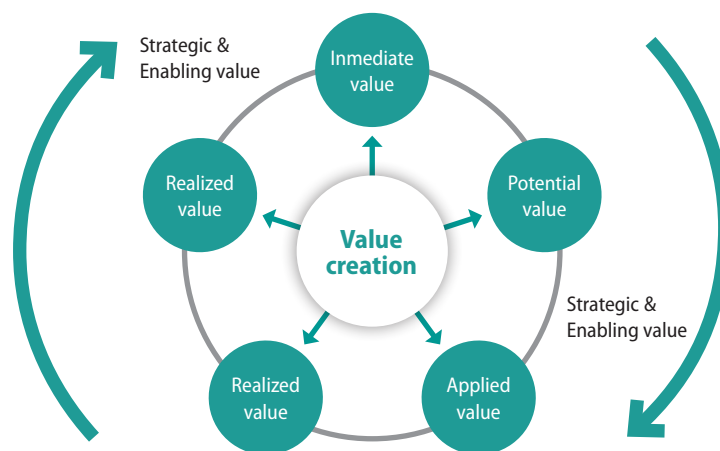


Figure 2. Capacity Building and Networking: Value Creation in CEE programme



3. Programme activities and value creation

CLAYSS work programme in CEE included:

1. Training and development of learning resources
2. Technical assistance and institutional support plans
3. Publications adapted to the region and new ones, translated into local languages by local partners in some cases.
4. Network working meetings
5. International Service-Learning Conference and the International Service-Learning Week
6. Regional Service-Learning Conference & Service-Learning Week (CEE)
7. Award for Service-Learning Experiences
8. Systematisation and Communication of Service-Learning Experiences
9. Training of trainers and promoters

CLAYSS began implementation of the CEE programme with the first five components, integrating the participation of (future) Network partners. Working together around shared purposes gave momentum and movement to the Network and, at the same time, contributed to increasingly improving the relevance of the proposals in the region and the effectiveness of the implementation of the actions.

3.1. Description of the activities

A. Training and development of learning resources

Online course for staff and faculty of Higher Education Institutions

Purpose: to provide the basic concepts and strategies to start developing SSL projects in higher education.

Recipients: authorities, faculty and students from higher education institutions and members of civil society organisations who work alongside higher education institutions.

Online course for school teachers, NGOs representatives and youth leaders

Purpose: to provide the basic concepts and strategies to start developing SSL projects in community organisations and schools at all levels.

Recipients: teachers, workers of all school levels, authorities as well as community representatives and members of civil society organisations.

Training for Trainers

Purpose: to provide strategies to train and advise teachers, professors and authorities of educational institutions to develop SSL projects and manage its institutionalisation.

Recipients: educators from CSOs, schools, universities and public officers.

Training for SL Award Evaluators

Purpose: to train specialists on the management of the evaluation process of SSL experiences and the application of evaluation instruments.

Recipients: members of the Network’s partner organisations that carry out the Award.

Training on SL pedagogy for promoters

Purpose: to provide strategies and tools to disseminate SSL and facilitate the project development process.

Recipients: members of the Network and staff of the educational institutions.

Teaching and learning resources

Each of the aforementioned pieces of training included presentations, videos, best practice cases and publications. Throughout the implementation of the programme, partners were encouraged and supported to develop their own local language resources (see Annex 1 for a list of resources developed).

B. Technical assistance and institutional support plans

Onsite and online sessions to train institutional and local representatives

These are tailor-made consultancies carried out by CLAYSS’ team, specialised in management and support of programmes and projects of solidarity service-learning. They are developed for some time and based on objectives and work plans agreed with each institution. In some cases, a change of modality was added in the CEE programme, whereby the support plans were implemented together with local organisations with command of the local language, a greater degree of influence and knowledge of the local territory.

C. Publications adapted to the region and new ones, translated into local languages in some cases

The development of learning materials and the encouragement of production, communication and exchange of knowledge on SSL are considered a key component to sustain the quality of the programmes.

CLAYSS produces publications to adapt its proposal to the implementation context and ensure its relevance, pertinence and significance (see Annex 1 for a list of the resources developed).

D. Network working meetings

These meetings are developed based on an agreed agenda of activities, among which are the following:

- Promotion and follow-up of training sessions
- Adaptation of training and learning resources to the regional context
- Follow-up of institutional support plans
- Contribution to the selection of participants for the International Service-Learning Conference and the International Service-Learning Week
- Organisation of the Regional Service-Learning Conference
- Organisation of the Regional Award for successful Service-Learning practice

- Coordination of information gathering actions in the region
- Dissemination of local and regional news
- Exchange of experiences and resources
- Joint request for international cooperation funds for joint projects

E. International Service-Learning Conference & Service-Learning Week (Argentina)

CLAYSS grants scholarships for attendance and organises associated activities (visits to institutions, meetings with SSL project protagonists, work meetings, workshops, among others) for international guests of the Programme.

F. Regional Service-Learning Conference & Regional Service-Learning Week (CEE)

As part of the actions that promote the dissemination and strengthening of solidarity service-learning, CLAYSS encourages and supports the organisation of regional conferences, among other academic activities.

G. Regional Award for Successful Service-Learning Practice

This initiative seeks to give visibility and recognition to quality SSL practices carried out in the region. Its organisation and installation in the local agenda contribute to the dissemination of SSL pedagogy promotion projects and institutionalisation and inspire and strengthen networks. It is an initiative managed integrally in the region in an associated manner among members of the Network and led by one of the local organisations, with support and advice from CLAYSS.

H. Systematisation and Communication of Service-Learning Experiences

On the one hand, the communication and dissemination of SSL experiences are recognitions of the project's protagonists. On the other, they serve as an example and inspiration for those who are only starting out in this pedagogy. Systematising information on the experiences provides relevant information on the state of affairs in the country or region, contributes to the design of appropriate strategies for their development and favours research and the production of academic knowledge on the subject.

3.2. Value creation

A. Immediate and potential value

In general terms, the creation of immediate value can be identified in the training activities and seminars/conferences. Meeting colleagues from other countries in the region, having the opportunity to talk about education systems and the possibilities that open up when developing SSL projects, training, exchanging ideas, experiences and good practices have contributed to participants feeling inspired and participating in a broader movement.

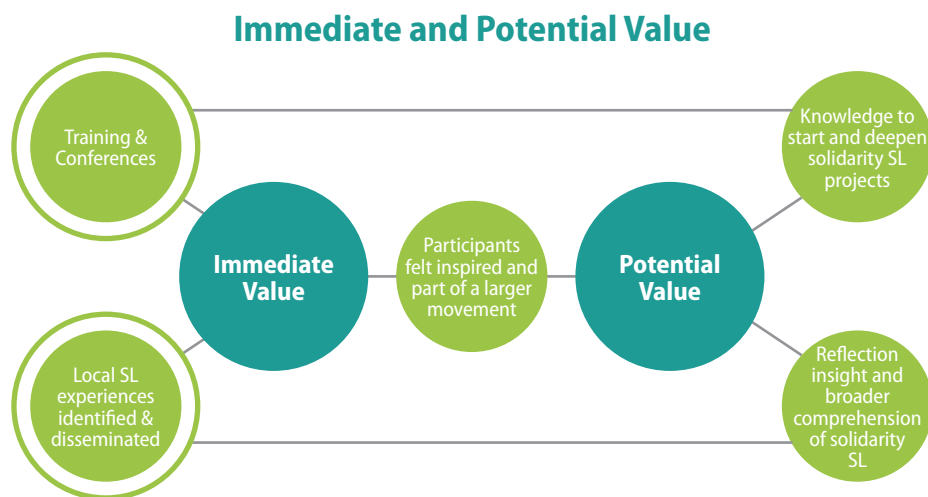


Figure 3. Visualisation of the immediate and potential value created in CEE programme

It was a very practical course, based on real experiences. The information was relevant, up-to-date and exciting. The course is an excellent guideline for how to develop a project and it is innovative as it helps you integrate the traditional service projects into the curriculum and into the every-day learning process of the students. It also offered a very important opportunity to know new people that are specialists in this field and are involved in similar projects. I feel I am part of a large and beautiful community of dedicated and wonderful people. I have learnt a lot and I improved my personal experience in running projects. The project also gave me the opportunity to share this valuable information with my colleagues from the whole school community. Thank you for the wonderful experience!⁵

Very solid theoretical background and great examples of best practice. The exchange forums gave us the opportunity to share ideas and communicate easily.⁶

The positive aspect was to see the real examples from practice, a practical methodic [manual] how to plan, implement and close the project.⁷

The most positive aspect of the course was the interaction between the participants. The videos were also very interesting to hear the experiences about SL. It was my first experience in such a training. It was a special experience because you learn from various cultures and how things vary from country to country, but this served as a very good aspect of the training since it helps how a special methodology is spreading out in many countries and it is becoming applicable everywhere.⁸

The online aspect is a winner (there is not much chance that any of us would go overseas) and the fact that I didn't have to participate financially really made the difference (my institution would not pay for me and I could not afford it myself).⁹

(Testimonials from the participants)

⁵ Online Service-learning Course for schoolteachers, NGOs and youth leaders

⁶ Online Service-learning Course for schoolteachers, NGOs and youth leaders

⁷ Online Course for Higher Education

⁸ Online Course for Higher Education

⁹ Online Course for Higher Education

As the activities progressed, Network members, together with CLAYSS, began to adapt and re-invent the courses and learning materials, originally created by CLAYSS for Latin America to the regional and local context.

These adaptations involved participants in a deep reflection on the differences and similarities in teaching traditions across countries and regions. In the process, different interpretations of concepts and views on social challenges emerged. Talking, debating and agreeing on the best way to explain what SSL is how the projects are developed and their transformative potential were characteristic working dynamics of the Network’s joint projects.



When working in CEE, a question often arises as to whether service-learning is the same as experiential learning or project-based learning. The partners in the region reflect on that and give their perspectives.

<https://youtu.be/BIWsrc049Cw>

B. Applied value

The potential value of the Network’s participatory projects grew and turned into applied value through the development of courses and learning materials with greater relevance to the region.

Applied value was also created by identifying local SSL experiences of reference and producing videos and materials for dissemination and communication. (See Annex 2. Resources).

A secondary school went out to the community thinking that it was a small village and had a negative idea of their own village, they were trying to overcome it. Ten students with two teachers started to research in their community and they discovered that they had wonderful springs. They found that 100 years ago the village was known by the fact that it had very good waters with different minerals, and they discovered 5 springs.... After a month of research, they discovered 17 springs in the community and that each spring had its own story.... The students managed to gather together the entire community. They had the mayor, small businesses interested in cleaning the springs, elderly people involved because they knew the story of the village. Literally, the entire community was part of this project. At the end, now when you enter the village there is a big picture with a map of the 17 springs, with the story of each spring and its names. One of the springs has one of the names of the children... to recognize his contribution in the project. Literally, they rebranded their community and now it’s called the village of the 17 springs.... It’s a real story. This is the power of 10 students together with 2 teachers.... The school is becoming the driver of change in the community, it’s becoming very close to the municipality, very close to the community. So now, everybody in the community knows that something is happening in those schools. You cannot imagine the lights in the eyes of the kids when they discover that, and doing all these things. They feel so proud; they are 12 but they can change the entire community.

(An educator from Romania)

The Network’s work in the CEE programme to give visibility to projects, together with the testimonies of the participants, fed back into the core of potential value. On the one hand, it inspired more teachers, authorities and representatives of social organisations. On the other hand, it provided evidence of achievements in obtaining essential support for sustainability: diversified sources of financing and inclusion of SSL in the work agenda of national and regional government officials and agencies.

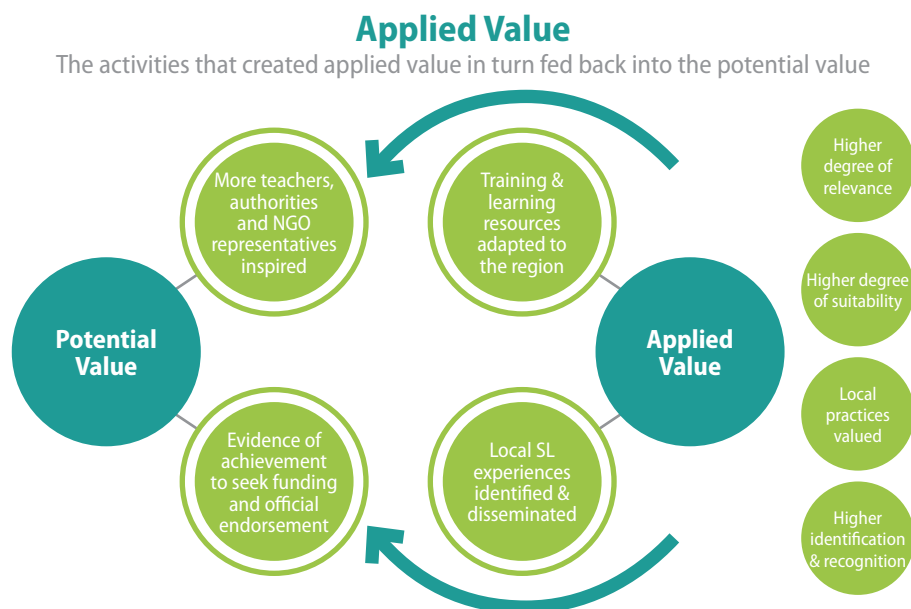


Figure 4. Visualisation of how the applied value fed back into the potential value created in the CEE programme

I know the value of an interactive approach in teaching and learning. The 21st century, having only academic knowledge does not suffice, because the society and economy are changing at a staggering speed. This is why, in Kosovo we are implementing curricula based on competences instead of old curricula based on content (...) I can happily say that the service-learning methodology allows for the development of these competences, something that I have seen in the competing projects for the regional service-learning award. I am also very content that in the last years Kosova has made very crucial steps in extending this methodology to our teachers and I hope that this trend will continue further. (...) This is a wonderful opportunity for our students who have finished different projects, starting from building up libraries, reading and gaming corners, summer classes in their schools and all the way to making masks for people in need. (...) Allow me to also greet the regional nature of this initiative. Let’s not forget that regional cooperation is one of the priorities for the regional countries towards European Integration and one of the main components of the European Union Western Balkan Platform. Regional cooperation helps us exchange our best practices and to prosper together faster. I am especially happy that this regional network will allow our students and teachers to get inspired from each other’s work through their field visits and, why not, I hope that soon we will implement joint regional projects where Kosovar students will contribute in implementing a project in BiH or the other way around. This gives us more hope for a friendlier future in the Balkans. Thank you for all the great work you are doing.

(Xhavit Rexhaj, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education and Science from the Republic of Kosovo, during the 1st SL Award Ceremony, 2020)

The editions of the Regional Service-Learning Conference & Regional Service-Learning Week and the creation of the Regional Award for Successful Service-Learning Practice were also activities of the CEE programme that were approached as joint projects of the Network. Their development involved processes of ideation, participatory decision-making, organisation and coordination of multiple actors from various organisations and institutions in the different countries of the region, which in many cases also contributed their own resources to carry out the agreed-upon activities. On some occasions, tensions emerged among the participants related to ethnic, national and political differences that put the safe and democratic space of the Network to the test. However, the dynamics itself, the shared journey and the collaboration/presence /intervention of CLAYSS and the other partners made it easier to solve them in the best possible way.

Joint Projects

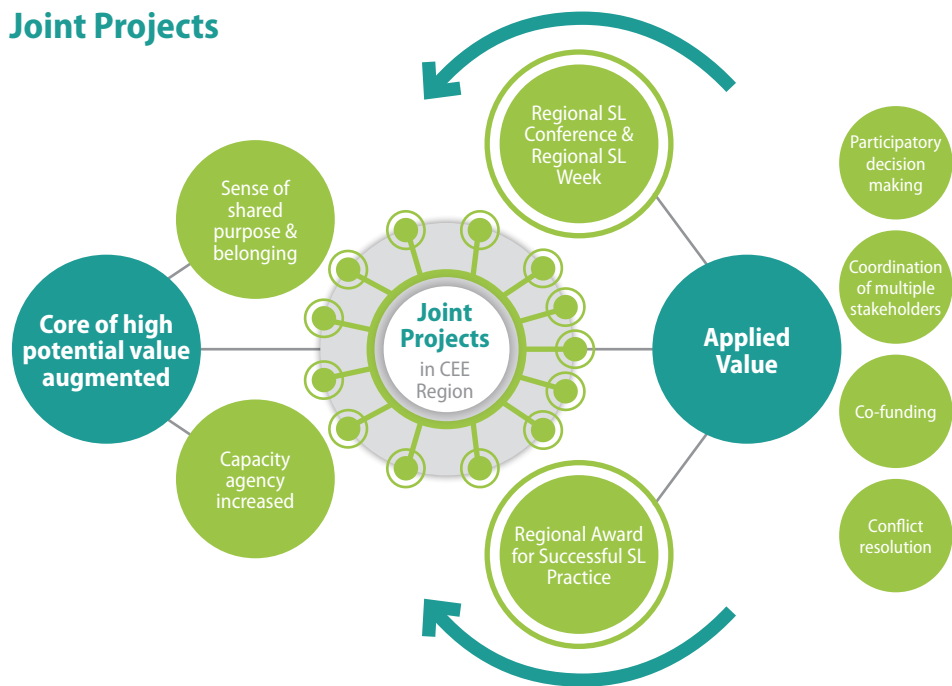


Figure 5. Visualisation of how the joint projects created capacity agency and potential value

We understand that as different partners from different countries start developing actions together, planning them jointly, new situations and problems necessarily arise. These previous years of sharing information, learning together, imagining a future together have enabled all of us to build a bond of trust and mutual cooperation which is key to go back to when these problems appear.

(Luz Avruj, CLAYSS coordinator for the CEE Programme, Argentina)

The participatory projects created a nucleus of high potential value in the region: everyone involved deepened their knowledge of the SSL pedagogy, broadened their perspective for understanding diversity, reached agreements and established sustainable coordination and decision-making mechanisms. By committing themselves to the task, creating bonds and achieving the proposed objectives, they experienced a sense of purpose and self-worth, which in turn gave greater impetus to the continuity of the Network’s actions, expansion into new projects and attracting diverse sources of funding, all of which in the end gives sustainability to the whole process.



Bosnian subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pskwK-cRUcw>

English subtitles <https://youtu.be/k637ajuw0TM>

I really strongly encourage both non-profit organisations as well as government institutions to join the Network, because there is a treasure of resources and experience.

Jehona Gjurgjeala, TOKA, Kosovo.

C. Realised value

Throughout the implementation of the programme, achievements were noted that indicate the capacity for sustainability of the promotion and SSL expansion towards systemic changes. In other words, in addition to building a network dynamic capable of self-nourishment and self-sustainability, improvements and concrete changes were evidenced:

- Network organisations translated resources (courses, learning materials, cases and experiences and others) into local languages. Thus, by freeing themselves from the limitation of language barriers, they gained autonomy and capacity for greater territorial coverage to train and multiply the SSL promotion (See Annex. Resources).
- Service-learning began to be institutionalised in some universities and schools: cooperation ties with social organisations were strengthened, new positions were created and the subject was integrated into institutional projects.

We have started school with great news: TC [Transylvania College] senior leadership team agreed on building a SL framework as the main strategy in our school, aligned with curriculum mapping. In the years to come, it will be multiplied in Romanian schools through a nationwide project proposal of changing the culture in schools.

(A representative of Transylvania College, Romania)

- The participating organisations in the Network developed their own projects for the promotion of service-learning with their own funding or with the support of other organisations.

Potential and Realised Value

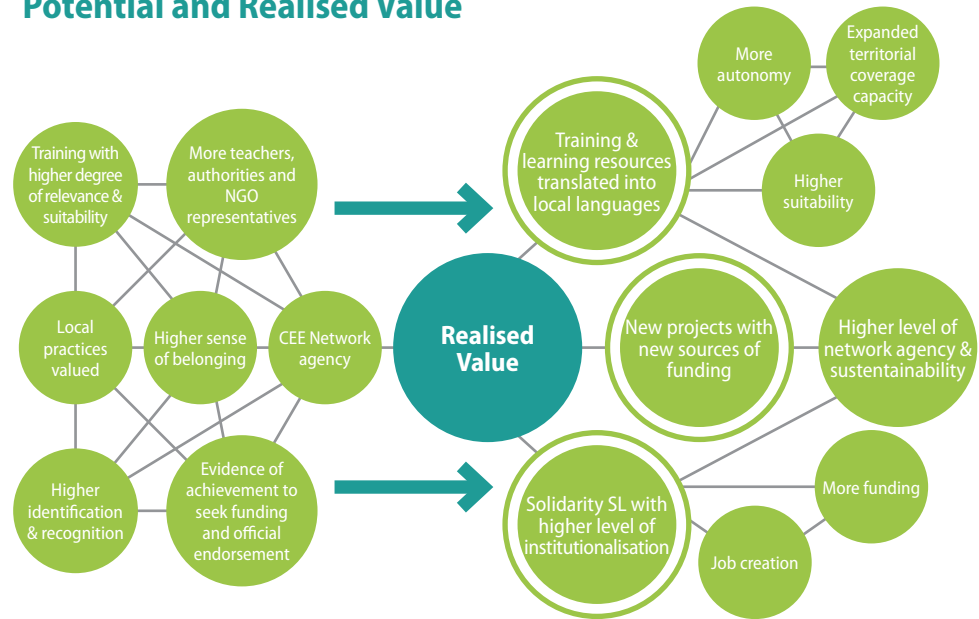


Figure 6. Visualisation of the potential and the realised value created in the CEE programme

D. Transformative value

The CEE programme also records results that show transformations in how certain things had been usually done, for example:

The Balkan Region educational system introduces the SL pedagogy

- SL courses have been officially recognized and accredited in Romania and Kosovo.
- Slovakia’s Ministry of Education has included service-learning in its strategy of education of children and youth. This has become a leading case for educational organisations in the region.
- Partners in Slovakia made an agreement with the Ministry of Education to hold a National Award together with the Regional one on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions.
- Partners from Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina obtained support from their Ministries of Education to disseminate and give visibility to the Award.
- SL has become an educational strategy in Slovakia, as well as in Higher Education in Montenegro.

I have delivered a Service-Learning session (to about 70 teachers from all over Romania) during the Aspire for Teachers! Academy 2018. It was great and the trainees were so enthusiastic about this approach.

(A representative of Transylvania College, Romania)

Local organisations take the lead in the management and implementation of the programme in its last phase

- International Association “Interactive Open Schools” (MIOS Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina) takes responsibility for coordination, implementation of actions and budget execution. Apart from programme management of other actions, it

is committed to the development of the Network from a leadership and liaison role. It informally assumes the Executive Secretariat of the Network and its representation before other organisations.

- It assumes the general coordination of the Award at the regional level and the supervision of the implementation at the national levels in the different participating countries.
- All Regional SL Weeks and Conferences were developed by local partners in different countries, and the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Conferences were delivered jointly with different Erasmus+ programmes designed and implemented by Network members.

SL Network and CLAYSS reach visibility and become a reference in the region

- Three projects accepted by Erasmus+ planned by CEE SL Network show that the European Union is supporting actions related to the development of SL in the region, as well as accompanying the growth of service-learning at a European level. The 3rd Regional SL Conference hosted participants from several countries in the region, as well as from Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, South Africa and Kenya.
- CLAYSS and the CEE SL Network members have been invited to join the community of practice in service-learning within the SLUSIK project.¹⁰ In their report State of the art report on service learning in Europe,¹¹ they highlight how both the CEE Regional SL Network and the implementation of the regional Award have been key to give impulse to service-learning at a European level.
- The manager of the Service-Learning programme at TOKA (Kosovo) was interviewed by the European Union Office in Kosovo, which has been supporting SL programmes through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights EIDHR.¹²
- CLAYSS also collaborated with the establishment of the European Association for Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE).¹³ CEE SL Network partners were strong promoters and were strongly recognized by academics in other parts of Europe.
- Researchers from the region published different papers on RIDAS (a biannually-issued scientific journal which aims to contribute to acquiring and sharing knowledge on service-learning).^{14 15 16}

10 The purpose of the project “SLUSIK: Service Learning Upscaling Social Inclusion for Kids” is to promote and support social inclusion by enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences and fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights in school leavers. The SLUSIK Project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, is led by the CEV (Belgium) in collaboration with Out of the Box International (Belgium), Rijeka University (Croatia), University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Granada (Spain), University College of Teacher Education, Vienna (Austria), Matej Bel University (Slovakia).

11 SLUSIK. State of the art report on service learning in Europe, 20 September 2021. Available here <https://www.slusik.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/State-of-the-Art-Report-SLUSIK-project.pdf>

12 https://europehouse-kosovo.com/empowering-future-generations-through-innovative-pedagogical-approaches/?fbclid=IwAR3HLjhtQ26RSZlGaqoVOS68pdLsYuSK4SEukx391_yq91NAyW0bcWc7T8

13 The goal of the Association is to promote service-learning in higher education in Europe and to foster scholarly activities related to it.

14 Bates, D. (2017). *Education for Transformation. Service Learning and the 3C's: Character, Competence, and Contribution*. In RIDAS N°3. Available in <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/RIDAS2017.3.6>
Bariaková, Z., Kubealaková, M. (2017). Experience of Implementing Service Learning at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. In RIDAS N°3. Available in <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/RIDAS2017.3.11>

15 Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Daniela Ivanová, Anna Kniezová (2020). 'Ears to the Soul': A volunteer programme based on the principles of service-learning as an alternative to the professional practice of student social work placement during the pandemic. In Ridas N°10. Available in <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/33105>

16 Y. Kleban, Y. Kokoiachuk, I. Krynytska (2022). A model of service-learning implementation: case of Ukrainian Catholic University. In RIDAS N°12. Available in <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/38012>

- Two Network members from Bosnia and Herzegovina, MIOS and Genesis Project, were invited as relevant actors by UNICEF to contribute to the consultation process on educational transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (June 2022).
- The Council of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina supported MIOS’s Tuzla project of dissemination of the Service-Learning methodology within the project “Quality Education for all” as part of Horizontal Facility for Western Balkan and Turkey II, European union and Council of Europe”

SL Regional Award is a game-changer for the CEE Network

The three first editions of the Award evaluation process had two phases: one at a national level and in the local language, and one at a regional level in English. The process of jointly evaluating and considering the local specificities to reach a regional agreement in an organised and unbiased manner was one of the most impressive achievements of this stage. Then, the delivery ceremony was jointly organised by all Network members.

Developing a Regional Award for schools was a deeply challenging endeavour, considering that each participating country has its own educational regulations, school system, as well as different languages and cultural backgrounds. It was a collective work among colleagues from countries and cultural origins generally associated with conflict and war. Situations of mistrust and conflict rose, and it was (and will be) the Network challenge to keep building collectively and nurturing bonds of respect for each other:

Great energy, it felt like a graduation moment for a network that has been building trust and synergy during these years; we somehow needed a challenge to prove our value and this was it and we rose up to it.

(A member of TOKA, Kosovo, local organiser of the 2nd SL Award Ceremony, 2021)

The Award delivery caused a great impact on teachers too:

This award is like a little engine making us aware of the fact that our projects have an international echo and that our activity produces a change in the lives of our students and our community and that is all we want, all we need. Thank you and we won’t stop, it’s a promise.

(Alexandra, Middle School “Sava Popovici Barcianu” Sibiu, Romania Sheepfolds in the Căndrel Mountains, at the 1st Award Ceremony, 2020)

Educational leaders promote SL as an innovative and powerful pedagogy and increase their capability of training others in order to continue expanding the critical mass

The development of a critical mass was one of the objectives of the programme to leave installed capacity and ensure that service-learning is sustainable in the region, continues to grow and has an impact even once CLAYSS’ programme ends: to develop a critical mass of educators, leaders of NGOs and public officers specialised in the subject that sustain and expand service-learning initiatives and institutionalisation at a regional level, in order to leverage systemic changes.

You could see during the pandemic this huge, huge gap between those who could still connect and those left behind, so the pandemic actually accentuated this kind of gap. What SL did in our country, I'll say it in two words: Solidarity and peer to peer.¹⁷

Teaching is not any more static, is not any more theoretical, we need to move to hands on, we need to move to what is needed with a purpose. We are learning this not for the exam, we are learning this not to get a better job, we are learning this to make a meaningful contribution to our lives and our community... SL gives a purpose.¹⁸

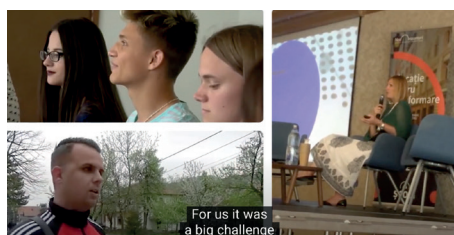
I think we are more or less the same countries and we have the societies that we have thanks to the efforts that the previous generations have made. We are thinking that we need to improve our societies and the best way to improve our societies is to invest in youth, the aim of SL is to invest in youth and by investing in youth we are trying to improve our societies. We all have challenges in our education systems and maybe they are kind of similar, maybe they are different but we are here thanks to a partnership. I remember 3 or 4 years ago in my first training on service-learning in BiH and I was there with some three teachers, and now I can say that we started implementing SL in only one school, but now we have schools from the North of Albania from the most South who are implementing the SL methodology and are bringing children closer to the community, closer to the government and bringing parents as well closer to the school. I think that without this collaboration we won't change our societies. We are trying to give power to our children and to the youth and to increase their self-confidence. They can change things. They are engaging in small projects but increasing their self-esteem and their teamwork and leadership. They understand more how the society functions and they try to change small things, but they become confident that they will change bigger things. This is what we try to do in slow things, but we are investing in youth that are the future of our nations.¹⁹

(Testimonials from representatives)



Some of the teachers are not used to seeing the students as leaders, they are beneficiaries... For us it was a big challenge to let the students lead the projects.

Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network. <https://youtu.be/k637ajuw0TM>



17 New Horizons Foundation, Romania, at the 4th Regional SL Conference, Kosovo.

18 Transylvania College, Romania



The first and basic thing in service-learning is the active participation of students and that is why service-learning belongs to young people.

Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network. <https://youtu.be/k637ajuw0TM>

The network member organisations take the initiative for the expansion of service-learning. Coordination, mutual support and mobilisation of diversified funding sources are strong indications of installed capacity and sustainability of actions.

The following are the main initiatives and emerging projects of the Network partners developed during the programme’s development. These are actions that:

- arise among the participating organisations,
- attract other sources of funding,
- mobilise mutual collaboration,
- expand the scope of the programme.

The latter was planned as part of the initiatives of the Network, to leverage and reinforce joint actions. In a broad sense, they show significant changes among decision-makers and partners affecting the opportunity to engage in the SL promotion throughout the region.

On another note, this shows the impacts of the programme beyond what was originally planned and agreed with the donor. This shows a conscientiously carried out work to leave installed capacity and a network working together in the region that ensures the economic and institutional sustainability of the topic beyond the programme.

Models of collaboration:

Matej Bel University (Slovakia) led the design and planning and then requested funding for the SLIHE Erasmus+ project “Service-learning in Higher Education—fostering the third mission of universities and civic engagement of students” together with other universities in the region and led the project when it was approved. It included onsite training and resource development for Higher Education teachers of Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Austria and Germany. CLAYSS participated as an associated partner in this Erasmus+ project even though it’s not a European organisation.

The University has set up a fund to support SL projects and hosted the 3rd Regional Service-Learning Week co-funded between CLAYSS and the SLIHE Erasmus+ project.

Matej Bel University, has also signed agreements with University of Buenos Aires and University of San Isidro (both in Argentina) to agree on mobility projects for faculty. This work allows knowledge exchange between Latin American and Central and Eastern European universities to make service-learning stronger in both regions and promote South-South Cooperation.

Invited by this University, some partners of the Network are now starting to develop a new project funded by Erasmus+, SLIDE-project (Service-Learning as a pedagogy to promote inclusion, diversity and digital empowerment), together with partners from Belgium, Netherlands, Croatia, Germany, Romania, Spain, Austria, Slovakia and Italy.

Promotion of SL

in CEE Region

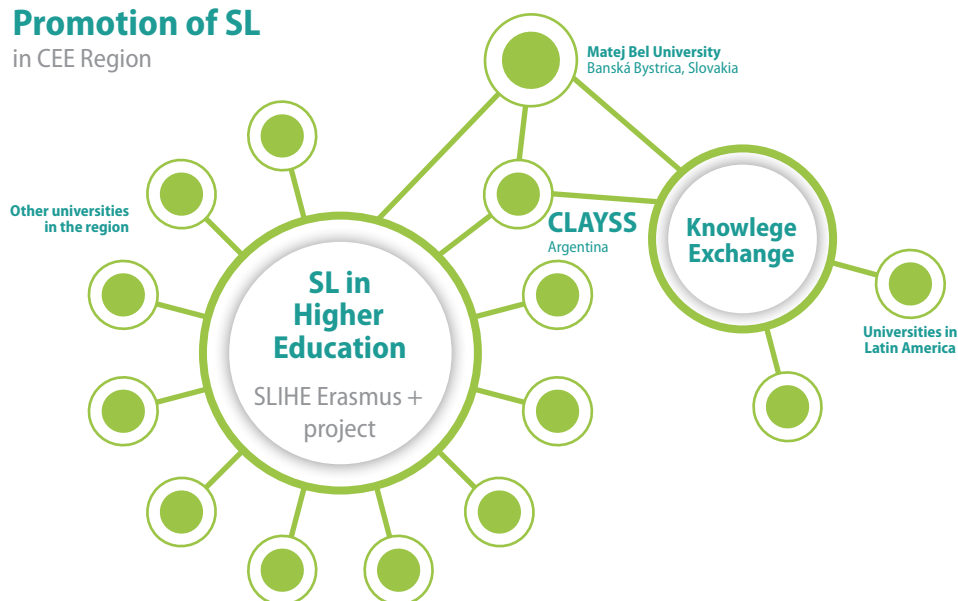


Figure 7. Initiatives of Matej Bel University

Genesis Project (Bosnia and Herzegovina) got funding from Community Arts Lab to develop SL in the Arts in their canton, and CLAYSS and MIOS Tuzla supported and accompanied this initiative. They decided to incorporate service-learning in their already strong work with schools. They say:

During our everyday work in the divided schools in the Middle Bosnia canton, in the months after we have successfully finished the on-line course “Development of Service-Learning Projects” [through a scholarship awarded through CLASS’ programme], we have started to (briefly) introduce the school teachers from the divided schools about all benefits which Service-Learning could bring to their schools. Today, we have large groups of schoolteachers working in the divided schools in the Middle Bosnia canton, who are highly interested in learning more about the Service-Learning methodology. Those are the teachers which have been participating in different educational workshops, seminars and trainings organised and held by the Genesis teams, who are eager to learn and make positive changes and improvements in their educational and upbringing work with children.

(A representative of Genesis Project, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Promotion of SL in CEE Region

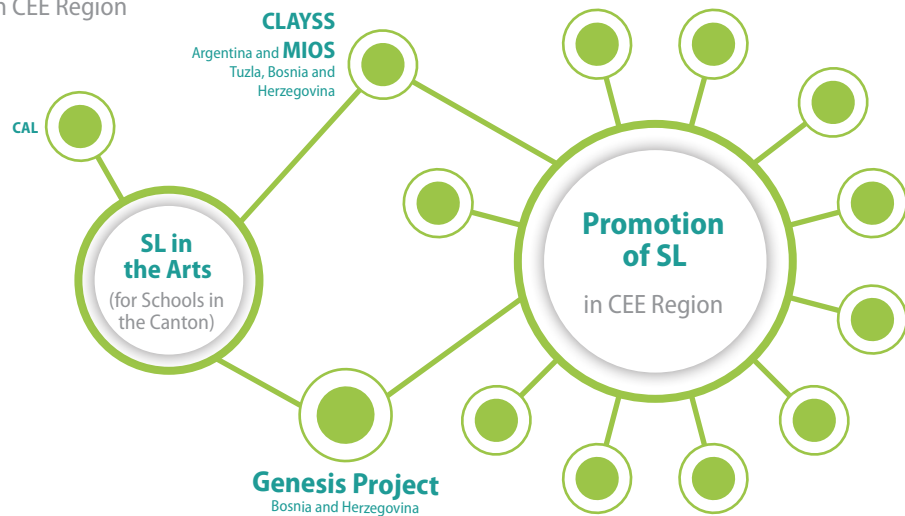


Figure 8. Initiatives of Genesis Project

New Horizons Foundation together with Transylvania College and Babes Bolyai University (Cluj Napoca, Romania) were the partners in charge of organising the 2nd Regional SL Week in CEE. The content was developed jointly by CLAYSS and the CEE SL Network and all logistical aspects were their responsibility.

Promotion of SL in CEE Region

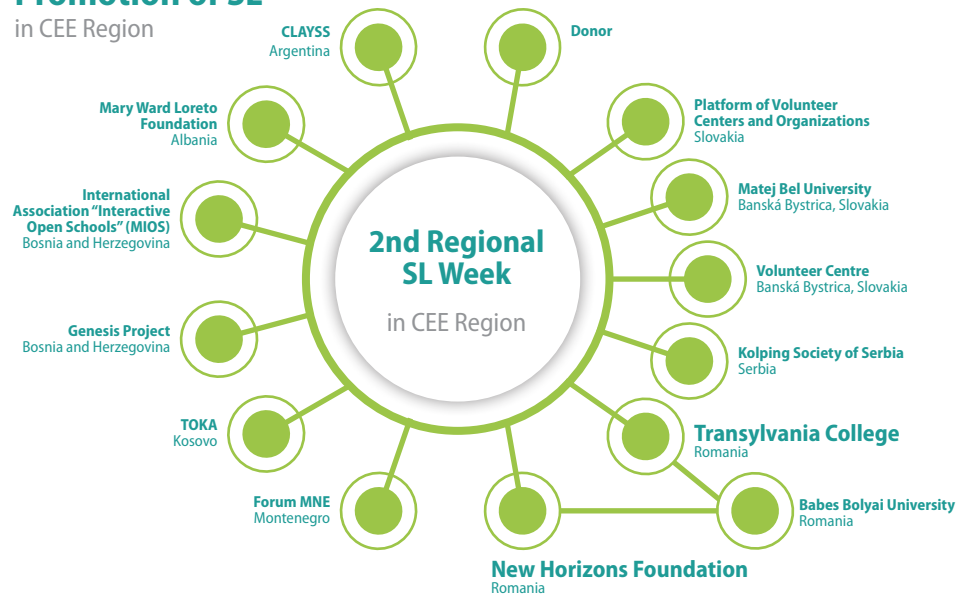


Figure 9. New Horizons Foundation together with Transylvania College (Cluj Napoca, Romania) and Babes Bolyai University were the partners in charge of the 2nd Regional SL Week in CEE.

Transylvania College implemented SL projects in different locations within Romania and training schools around the country in this methodology.

Transylvania College’s service-learning team won the category “Innovation” with the project “From Root to Fruit”. Service-learning approach is considered valuable, innovative and promoted as a best practice in the public sphere.

TOKA first heard about SL in one of the first activities organised by CLAYSS through this programme. From there on, it got funding from different sources and have been training teachers to form “Super Volunteer Clubs” for several years, selecting growing groups of youngsters to develop dozens of SL projects throughout Kosovo. The colleague network New Horizons Foundation helped them and supported them through the process, and they did the same with Mary Ward Loreto Foundation in Albania.

The **Kolping Society of Serbia** invited partners from the Network to their SL promotion events in Serbia and actively participated in different initiatives of the Network with varying levels of involvement in different moments. They are working towards the creation of a national SL network, to which MIOS has been contributing through fluent communication and discussing joint activities.

Through **MIOS Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**, **CLAYSS agreed with the University of Tuzla** to offer a support programme that includes onsite and online training as well as assessment to universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

MIOS Tuzla established the Schools Network for Service-Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina involving schools from all parts of the country with the intention to strengthen the community of schools and teachers and to promote Service-Learning practices within the country and the region. Training materials are digitalized on MIOS’ virtual education centre on official Bosnia and Herzegovina languages. Link: <https://edu.ioskole.net/>

Promotion of SL

in CEE Region

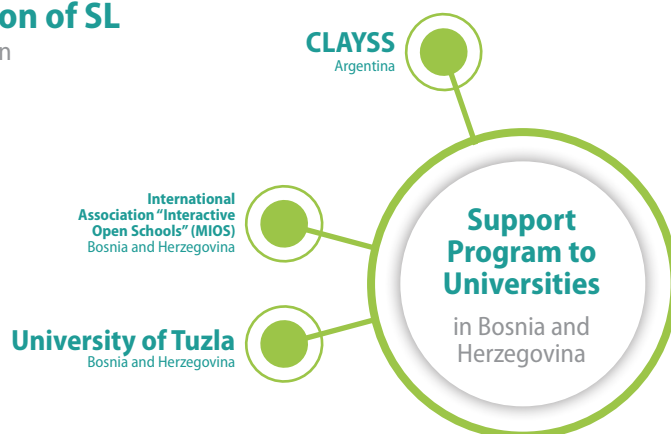


Figure 10. CLAYSS and the University of Tuzla (through MIOS): Support Programme to Universities

TOKA (Kosovo), MIOS (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Forum MNE (Montenegro) and New Horizons Foundation (Romania) have been granted a fund for a joint Erasmus+ KA2 HEARMI capacity-building project focusing on SL. TOKA led the process with partners from the Network to design a project concerning SL in youth organisations that includes opportunities for SL leaders and youth to exchange experiences and develop some joint resources. The whole project was designed with the CEE SL Network in mind to make good use of all possible synergies.

Promotion of SL

in CEE Region



Figure 11. TOKA, MIOS, Forum MNE and New Horizons Foundation in joint project

The bonds established triggered other actions funded by third parties, among many others:

- CLAYSS was invited as a keynote speaker to the conference “Architects of Education” in Romania (onsite, 2018) and INED Innovative Education Forum in Ukraine (online, 2020)
- participation of CLAYSS in seminars, workshops and talks organised by regional partners, and participation of regional partners in activities organised by CLAYSS
- translation of materials on SL into local languages
- co-design and implementation of “Service-learning—Engaged and Collaborative Teaching and Learning in Social Work” (2022), led by Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica (Slovakia) and facilitated by CLAYSS with a pan-European scope with speakers and participants from different continents
- incorporation of the Ukrainian Catholic University into the UNISERVITATE programme

Beyond these initiatives, it is important to highlight as a sign of the Network’s growth that partners started to resort to each other to request help. For example, MIOS (Bosnia and Herzegovina) has assessed and offered technical assistance to the Genesis Project and has been accompanying Kolping Serbia; it has contributed to creating a Serbian National Service-Learning Network, as well as supporting local SL projects in Serbia.

TOKA (Kosovo) helped Mary Ward Loreto in Albania with some projects, and Matej Bel University in Slovakia supported colleagues in other countries to plan the incorporation of service-learning in education policy.

E. Strategic and Enabling Value

One of the main characteristics of the CCE programme was the permanent contact with the Network partners to implement and follow up the activities, and make decisions jointly. Since the programme started, especially with the global situation caused by the COVID pandemic and its variants, flexibility and openness to change original plans was a characteristic throughout the development of the programme; the schedule of dates changed, some face-to-face activities needed to be carried out remotely, some actions were negotiated and redesigned. All partners’ flexibility and adaptability of was put to the test to ensure continuity in their actions. This versatility was crucial to leave installed capacity in the region and a network of partners working together to ensure the economic and institutional sustainability of the topic beyond the programme.

A significant example of modification of the original proposal was the implementation of institutional support plans. At the beginning of the programme, CLAYSS provided institutional support through its team of referents specialised in the management of SL programmes and projects. As the work with the regional network referents progressed and knowledge of local specificities deepened, it was agreed that the most effective strategy would be to provide support to institutions through partner organisations in the region. CLAYSS changed its initial proposal, accompanied and trained local representatives to carry out this action.

Through constant monitoring and interest in receiving information on the social context, the development of human resources and the collaboration of external partners, our partner-donor stimulated reflection and the production of relevant and timely knowledge for decision-making. It is worth highlighting this strategic and enabling value.

4. Network mindset to build community agency

This paper presented the two central components of CLAYSS’ work strategy: capacity building and networking. Both components are intertwined and mutually reinforcing through the commitment and involvement of network partners in shared purposes.

Building the network around a shared purpose enhances human connections to develop community capacity (Olson and Brennan, 2017):

Community agency reflects the adaptive capacity to manage, utilise, and enhance a group’s resources. Social interaction enhances a local population’s awareness and ability to act as a collective group. Communication and social interaction inform individuals and social fields about their shared concerns or issues. Interaction increases the capacity of individuals and groups to act on their shared concerns by pooling their knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources. Community agency means having access to greater physical, capital, and intellectual resources that can extend beyond one’s social network, field, or the locality itself. Awareness and capacity are made meaningful by enabling and initiating action. Community emerges when people from different social fields use their collective capacity to act on mutual place-based issues.

The CEE Network established an independent cooperative structure that allowed individuals and organisations to collaborate safely and in a non-hierarchical manner. Its focus on committed, trust-based relationships was key to overcoming situations of conflict.

CLAYSS embraces “the network mindset” as it sees itself as part of a larger web of activity, developing stronger connections to generate impact through collaboration (Ehrlichman, January 29, 2022). Accordingly, CLAYSS acted as a coordinator rather than a single decision-maker at the top, promoting a shared leadership. The role required articulates a common purpose and remains resilient to adversity. Significant time and effort were invested in consensus-building, communicating across sub-groups and sustaining change.

According to the narrative of the processes displayed throughout the implementation of the programme, we may identify “the driving force behind the effective networks” (The Health Foundation, 2014):

*A **common purpose** acts as the network’s axle: drawing members together, keeping them aligned and moving in the same direction.*

*Next, a network can establish a **cooperative structure** that allows people to work together across organisations, make decisions and pool resources. This acts like the bearings in a wheel, enabling movement.*

Value is further enhanced by gathering collective intelligence, which accumulates as members share and learn from each other, facilitating discussion and experimentation.

Value also stems from developing a sense of community, with members benefiting from each other and building relationships that foster reciprocity and discretionary effort.

Then the network can gain momentum and [can make progress in building a] critical mass as it continues to expand, increasing its value for members. This mutually reinforcing cycle, like air in the tyre of a wheel, helps a network maintain momentum.

Management report on the program for the “Promotion of Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe 2016-2022”

Throughout this document, progress, results and participants’ opinions were reported. The expected achievements are as important as the emerging ones, i.e. what was not fully defined and specified in advance. This is consistent with the human development perspective that frames the actions: openness to emergent processes is part of their design. In such openness, although there is a quota of uncertainty, what emerges is not spontaneous but a creation from a set of conditions built by the programme. Developing capacities and building conditions for the sustainability of transforming processes requires the desire and commitment of all partners and participants involved.

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Annex. Resources

All training and communication resources, as well as the academic output associated with the programme, are available on its web page: <https://www.clayss.org.ar/CEE/resources.html>

Academic Articles & Publications

1. Mapping of the educational situation in the Central and Eastern European region with focus on service-learning.²⁰
(English) http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/Report-Mapping-EE.pdf
2. Service Learning: a model of learning through working with the local community. Overview, tracking and evaluation of school projects. Bojana Perić Prkosovački, Sara Raković, Melinda Tomić. Kolping društvo Srbije (Kolping Society of Serbia)*
(English) http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-ModelofLearning_WL.pdf
3. RIDAS SL Journal (indexed and peer reviewed):
Dana Bates (New Horizons, Romania)
(English) <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/RIDAS2017.3.6>
Zuzana Bariaková, Martina Kubealaková (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia)
(English) <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/RIDAS2017.3.11>
Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia)
(English) <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/33105>
Y. Kleban, Y. Kokoiachuk (Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine)
(English) <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/RIDAS/article/view/38012>

Handbooks

1. *CEE Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students*²¹
(English)
http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-EE_nov17.pdf
(Romanian)
http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-EE_romanian.pdf
(Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian)
http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-EE_SC.pdf
(Serbian)
http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL-EE_SERBIAN.pdf

²⁰ Developed by partners in CEE with CLAYSS' support

²¹ Developed by CLAYSS with support / collaboration from regional partners

2. *Resourcebook for development of Service-Learning projects*

(English)

http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL_EasternEurope_Resourcebook.pdf

(Bosnian-Serbo-Croatian)

http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SL_EasternEurope_Resourcebook.pdf

3. *A guidebook for the methodology of Service-Learning in Albania*²²

(Albanian)

<https://www.albaniahope.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/service-learning-shqip.pdf>

4. *Service-Learning in Montenegro*²³

(Montenegrin)

http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/Servisno_ucenje_u_CG.pdf

5. *Service-Learning in the Arts Handbook*²⁴

(English)

http://www.clayss.org.ar/04_publicaciones/SSLintheArts_english.pdf

(Bosnian)

https://genesisbl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Prirucnik_za_servisno_ucenje_u_umjetnosti_HR.pdf

(Croatian)

https://genesisbl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Prirucnik_za_servisno_ucenje_u_umjetnosti_BOS.pdf

Systematisation of regional SL experiences

1. *Service-Learning local impact projects in Central and Eastern Europe*²⁵

(English)

https://clayss.org/sites/default/files/material/CEE/CEE_Impact.pdf

2. *Good practices recollection*

Several videos showcasing service-learning experiences in Central and Eastern Europe were produced by the partners in the region with locally managed funding sources and others translated into local languages.

22 Developed by regional partners

23 Developed by regional partners

24 Developed by CLAYSS, translated into English when requested by partners from the CEE SL Network and then translated into regional languages by them

25 Developed by CLAYSS with support / collaboration from regional partners

Kindergarten, primary and secondary school:

- Students talking about service-learning (regional). English <https://youtu.be/NQsPU6zQrNw>
- Mary Ward Loreto Foundation (Albania). Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhQImGD44go&feature=youtu.be>
- Sindibad Obdaniste (kindergarten in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Local language <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=382203797272786>
- Gračanica Živinice primary school (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YoQjrcRDtg&feature=youtu.be>
- Sapna secondary school (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3edl-xLkM&feature=youtu.be>
- Teočak secondary school (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dERd5zbLWe0&feature=youtu.be>
- Green Impact Baia Sprie (Romania). Local language and English subtitles Green Impact Baia Sprie
- Mary Ward Loreto 2020 SL experiences. Local language and English subtitles <https://youtu.be/vrpYQvDZ96A>
- Kolping (Serbia) Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILXIB5RI7mM>

Higher education:

- Forum MNE (Montenegro). Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKwil7fHqtg&feature=youtu.be>
- Matej Bel University (Slovakia) Local language and English subtitles <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSl0fmiGC1o&feature=youtu.be>



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