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centro latinoamericano de aprendizaje y servicio solidario

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe
Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

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Contents

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

Introduction to CLAYSS

CLAYSS, which stands for Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario, or Latin American Center for Service-Learning, promotes service-learning as an innovative pedagogy that employs 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 regional peculiarities, with the aim of constructing more democratic, just, and egalitarian societies.

CLAYSS was created to support students, educators, and community organizations in the development of solidary educational or service-learning projects. The latter are an opportunity for children and young adults to apply what they learn in service of their communities, and learn 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.

Founded in 2002, the Latin American Center for Service-Learning (CLAYSS):

- Develops financial and technical support programs for educational institutions and social programs wishing to design service-learning projects.

- Offers onsite and online professional development courses for educators and community leaders in Latin America and other world regions, as well as programs to provide technical assistance to educational institutions of all levels.

- Organizes the International Service Learning Conference every year in Buenos Aires.

- Develops quantitative and qualitative research programs on service-learning in Argentina and Latin America, partnering with universities and national and international organizations. Responsible for organizing and publishing the procedures for the Latin America Research Conferences since 2004.

- Advises social organizations, companies, and governments on implementing programs and policies that promote service-learning.

- Publishes freely accessible resource materials online for outreach, teacher training, and academic lessons.

- Promotes and coordinates networks encouraging service-learning at national, regional and international levels. Among others, CLAYSS is currently assisting in the creation of the Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network

CLAYSS in Central and Eastern Europe

In November 2015, CLAYSS was invited to Vienna to meet with educators from different countries in Central and Eastern Europe and discuss service-learning and its progress in Latin America. Several participants shared their experience of service-learning in Central and Eastern Europe, and all were enthusiastic about implementing it in schools, universities, and social organizations. That was the beginning of CLAYSS's work in the region. With local partners, we have so far translated our trainings and adapted them for online and onsite participation, invited regional leaders to our annual conference in Buenos Aires, and supported regional institutions willing to incorporate this approach to education. We are dedicated to forming a critical mass interested in implementing service-learning projects and incorporating this pedagogy into institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. It is our goal to eventually bring about this change in educational policy at national and regional levels.

For more information about us, visit http://www.clayss.org.ar/english/

To learn about our next activities in Central and Eastern Europe, please find us on Facebook under CEE Service-learning or contact *internacionales@clayss.org.ar*.

Introduction to the Handbook

This handbook is intended to guide educators interested in implementing service-learning projects. It is organized in three parts.

In Part One, the section **"Service-Learning and Education for the Future"** reflects on the educational challenges of the 21st century. In particular, it considers the influence of service-learning on students as they develop competencies, gain autonomy, and assume their active citizenship in contemporary societies. In this chapter, CLAYSS contextualizes its approach to service-learning within Central and Eastern Europe, while identifying the shared elements that promote a culture of encounter.

In Part Two, we present our definition of service-learning in broad terms with the section **"What is Service-Learning?"** The section **"Service-Learning as a Pedagogy,"** describes and analyzes its main pedagogical features. To encourage readers to imagine applying this theoretical framework to their specific contexts, we have included reflection questions at the end of each sub-section. The sub-section **"Comprehensive, Inclusive, and Quality Education"** explains service-learning's holistic definition of educational quality. Such an approach is crucial as projects aim at integrating academic excellence with community engagement and lessons in quantitative reasoning, citizenship, and values. This allows students to develop competencies for life and work within a diverse and inclusive educational environment. The sub-section **"Solidarity-Based Service Aimed at Meeting Real Needs of the Community"** explores the concept of solidarity and introduces CLAYSS's perspective on this term. The sub-section **"The Active Role of Students in Project Design, Implementation, and Evaluation"** analyzes the role of students and teachers in service-learning projects and the benefits of students' active participation. The final sub-section of Part Two, **"Learning Contents, Solidarity Service, and the Development of Student Competencies,"** discusses the influence of the service-learning approach on the development of student competencies and on the way students relate to knowledge, teachers, and community. The analytical framework presented in Part Two offers a foundation for implementing projects and a richer understanding of the processes involved.

Part Three guides the reader through the process of developing a service-learning project. The section **"Key Participants in Service-Learning Projects"** outlines the main responsibilities carried out by each key participant. The section **"Service-Learning Quadrants in Educational Institutions"** explains how to differentiate service-learning practices from other community engagement activities developed in educational environments. The section **"Transitions to Service-Learning"** identifies various transition pathways from different types of educational and community service practices towards service-learning experiences in the strict sense. **"Service-Learning Quality Criteria"** provides guidance on the quality assessment of both service and learning dimensions. **"Itinerary of a Service-Learning Project"** presents a sample outline of the processes involved in the experience. The section **"Stages and Cross-Cutting Processes in the Itinerary of a Service-Learning Project"** analyses the project stages that respond to a sequential and progressive logic of tasks. It also describes three cross-cutting processes, as certain aspects of the project remain present from start to finish. The section **"Tools"** provides different resources to boost project development.

Finally, the section **Appendices** contains further information on some of the research findings included in Part Two.

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 1

1.1 Service-Learning and Education for the Future

Donating books to those in need is community service.

Expressive reading, grammar instruction, and reading comprehension are learning activities.

Applying what has been learned in Language and Literature to design teaching strategies and materials for a literacy program in a community center is service-learning.

When, as educators, we think about the future of education, we often wonder how to better prepare students and ourselves to meet the challenges posed by globalization. As the world becomes ever more integrated and interconnected, we face unexpected scenarios that require knowledge and competencies "to better grasp realities and problems which are ever more global, transnational, multidimensional, transversal, polydisciplinary and planetary" (Morin, 1999:13).

The universal right to education has been acknowledged in international treaties. In societies where access to knowledge and information is essential to exercise citizenship fully, education emerges as one of the agents promoting social cohesion, inclusion and transformation. One of the major tasks of education in the twenty-first century is to help establish active, democratic, and multicultural societies that seek to promote better understanding between people.

Looking for effective educational tools to reach the UNESCO goals of XXIst Century Education "learn to learn, learn to do, learn to be, learn to live together" (Delors, 1996), many educational institutions as well as national educational policies around the world have in the last decades adopted the service-learning pedagogy.

Service-learning projects involve educational as well as specific social intervention. They are characterized by student leadership and contributions from educational institutions to communities in the form of active participation from the students involved.

If we consider the potential contributions of service-learning pedagogy, more questions arise: what types of knowledge and competency will better facilitate comprehension of complex issues? What pedagogical models are best to foster the development of these competencies? What elements and dimensions must be revised to accomplish these expectations? Which ones should be preserved? How might learning objectives be redefined to emphasize the relationship between theory and practice and, at the same time, connect more meaningfully to the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of societies? Are schools and universities the only sources of knowledge? What is the role of the community in education, and in which ways could it contribute to improve educational processes?

1.2 Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe: Diverse Cultures and Common Challenges

Mutual understanding implies an awareness of the different connotations of words in diverse cultures, and respect for the customs of others. It also requires increased comprehension of the values and the social, political, ethical, economic, and historical features of each society (cf. Morin, 1999: 50).

Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe encompass distinct regional identities. However, they share common challenges that allow for comparison between and within the two regions. For centuries, both regions have endured political and social turmoil, imperial oppression, economic crises, and civil wars. The transition to democratic regimes between the 1980s and 1990s took place in conjunction with profound economic reforms, completely changing the balance between the state, civil society, and the market. The adoption of market-friendly reforms in the context of a globalized socio-economic context provoked abrupt changes in the social fabric. Thus both regions are characterized by resilience in the face of hardship, creativity in solving ever-changing problems, a mistrust in bureaucracies, and a tenacious desire to bring about peace and prosperity on their own terms.

At present, educational actions adopted at the national level have been guided by the recommendations of international organizations such as the Organization of Ibero-American States (in the case of Latin American countries) and the European Union (in that of Central and Eastern European countries). These organizations have identified common educational challenges for the twenty-first century and act in similar ways to:

- Enhance the quality of education and curriculum.
- Encourage concrete application of academic material into the world of work.
- Guarantee and improve the participation in lifelong learning of youth and adult citizens.
- Strengthen the participation of society in the educational sphere.
- Enhance teacher training and support professional development.

The countries within each region implement plans of action to address educational challenges according to their own values, political and social realities, resources, and necessities. Lately, competency-based curriculum has been implemented at many schools as a means of bringing the learning experience closer to the reality of the working environment. The European Union defines competencies in terms of the skills required to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving labor market in contemporary democratic societies. A distinction between two types of competencies has been made: key competencies and transversal competencies. The former includes communication in the mother tongue, foreign languages, mathematical reasoning, basic skills in science and technology, computer literacy, learning to learn, social and civic competencies, and a sense of initiative. The transversal competencies are directed to support the learning of key competences, including critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision making, and emotional intelligence.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part.1

1.3 CLAYSS Approach to Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

Throughout the early 2000s, the Latin-American Center for Service-Learning (CLAYSS) was called upon at various points to promote its service-learning model in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Asia, as well as in Spain and Italy. In 2014, CLAYSS was invited to present this model to a group of NGOs and universities from Central and Eastern Europe. The lively dialogue that took place was the starting point for a joint effort to promote this pedagogy in the CEE region.

CLAYSS considers service-learning to be an innovative pedagogy that can facilitate the development of relevant competencies and values using a holistic approach, addressing the educational challenges of the twenty-first century while also responding to needs of local communities. Aiming to enable the development of democratic societies committed to social justice, CLAYSS strives to comprehend and address regional distinctions. As a Latin American organization, CLAYSS is well aware of the dangers of well-intending international agencies and consultants from more prosperous and powerful countries, who seek to give advice and impose their own foreign models in other contexts. 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.

This handbook is CLAYSS's first attempt to adapt the Latin American approach for implementation in Central and Eastern Europe. It is the fruit of an ongoing dialogue between the CLAYSS team and academics and social activists in the CEE region. We are confident that it will continue to be adapted, revised and translated into different languages within the region and in those countries willing to implement service-learning projects from CLAYSS's perspective.

In the next sections, we aim to provide guidance for the implementation of service-learning projects while remaining mindful of the contexts in which they will be carried out. Familiarizing oneself with the main pedagogical characteristics of the approach while recognizing its potential for variation will allow mutual comprehension and enrich the process.

Reflection Questions

What educational challenges do you encounter in your community and in your particular institution?

What skills and competencies would better prepare students to meet these challenges?

What learning opportunities for teachers would arise in this scenario?

What kind of educational experiences could contribute to the development of these skills and competences?

2.1   What is Service-Learning?

Nowadays, international consensus defines service-learning through three key characteristics:

- A focus on efficiently and effectively addressing needs with a community, and not just for the community.
- Active student involvement in all stages, from planning to assessment.
- Intentionally linked to learning content. (Curricular learning, reflection, development of skills for citizenship and work, research).

2.2   Service-Learning as a Pedagogy

The service-learning pedagogy is based in the concept that community and civic engagement can be an innovative means of applying academic subjects, acquiring competencies and skills, and modifying attitudes.

In the Latin American context, the term "solidarity" is incorporated into the term "Service-Learning" (*aprendizaje y servicio solidario*). In essence, the word evokes collaborative, mutual work rather than a unilateral contribution (i.e. just giving). In Latin America, "solidarity is mostly associated with collective action towards a common end and active civic participation rather than an individual altruistic initiative" (Tapia, 2003a: 36).

In service-learning projects, students play a leading role. They apply what they have learned in the classrooms to the actual needs of a community and, at the same time, receive training as organizers in social justice initiatives and democratic participation.

Service-learning pedagogy promotes:

I. ***Comprehensive, inclusive and quality education:*** Projects are aimed at simultaneously integrating academic excellence with community engagement, scientific and citizenship education, values education, and the development of competencies for life and work with the inclusion of diversity in education.

II. ***Initiatives aimed at meeting the real needs of a community:*** The development of community service (solidarity) activities aimed at effectively collaborating to solve real community challenges does not detract from the efficacy of the initiative, but rather incorporates learning with the development of transformative action, in which the "recipients" must play an active role.

III. ***The active role of students in the planning, development and assessment of the project:*** Service-learning is an active pedagogical approach; thus the students, more than the teachers, should drive the activities. If students do not get involved and embrace the project, the learning impact will be diminished.

IV. ***Integration of learning contents (theory) with community service*** (practice in service of the community) 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.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

Service-learning: (Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2007: 3):

- "***Strengthens the quality of education*** by providing concrete applications of the ideas presented in the lessons, allowing students to develop skills and competencies through experience: people need more knowledge to solve actual problems than to sit for an exam.
- ***Fosters civic engagement*** by allowing for the design and implementation of projects that bring about real transformative change.
- ***Promotes inclusivity*** by encouraging everyone´s participation, including that of people with disabilities and members of vulnerable populations. This combats the passivity of philanthropic models by incorporating active and effective engagement in local development projects.
- ***Builds networks*** among school and community organizations, thus facilitating the work of the school and helping to identify relevant joint projects for the common good.
- ***Modifies common perceptions*** of children and youth, allowing them to be active agents of change rather than "dependents" or "leaders of tomorrow."

2.2.1 Comprehensive, Inclusive and Quality Education

Currently, many schools face tension between "quality" and "inclusion," between "community engagement" and "academic excellence." Service-learning challenges this concept of mutual exclusion, defining "quality" in more expansive terms. Projects aim to integrate academic excellence with community engagement, scientific and civic education, ethics, and the development of competencies for life and work. This can only be achieved through the inclusion of diverse populations within the educational setting.

Unfortunately, teachers and school administrators are often reluctant to let students "waste their time" on community services for fear that this might affect performance on standardized tests or university entrance exams. Not only are these fears unfounded, they are also completely outdated. Today, some of the most prestigious institutions in the world have adopted service-learning practices, not only because they want to "give back to society", but also because research has proven the positive impact of these initiatives on the education of future professionals and leaders.

A summary of this research can be found in the works of (cf. Furco, 2005), Billig (cf. 2004; 2006), Tapia (cf. 2006), in the lectures given at International and Ibero-American congresses on service-learning , and in certain academic publications (cf. IARSLCE, 2014; RIDAS, 2015)[1]. According to their findings, some of the more positive impacts of service-learning include [2]:

- Improved academic performance, according to grades and objective assessments.
- The development of marketable skills.
- Higher awareness of ethics and social issues.
- The development of pro-social behavior.
- Increased resilience.
- Higher camaraderie within schools.
- Lower rate of truancy, repeated years, and dropout.
- The inclusion of students from more vulnerable populations.

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1   IARSLCE, International Association of Researchers on Service-learning and Community Engagement, http://www.researchslce.org/

2   For further readings on positive impacts of service-learning please refer to Annex 1.

- **Service-Learning as Comprehensive and Quality Education**

Dual intentionality and the "positive cycle" of service-learning:
Service-learning could be viewed as the intersection between two types of educational approaches generally kept separate in educational institutions. One consists of activities based in academic content with specific curricular objectives and research methodologies, as in the case of "field trips". The other involves service activities organized by the institution, such as fundraisers, food, clothing or book drives, vegetable gardens, tree-planting, academic tutoring, etc.

Dual intentionality of service-learning (cf. Tapia, 2006:24 and ss; Giorgetti, 2007)
Service-learning occurs at the intersection of these two types of activities, when a project is motivated by both intentional educational objectives and intentional civic engagement with a solidarity approach.

In fact, based on experiences recorded in thousands of educational institutions around the world, we could state that in service-learning projects a "positive cycle" is established where the academic knowledge applied improves the quality of the service offered to the community; and the action leads to a gain in comprehensive education and triggers new production of knowledge.
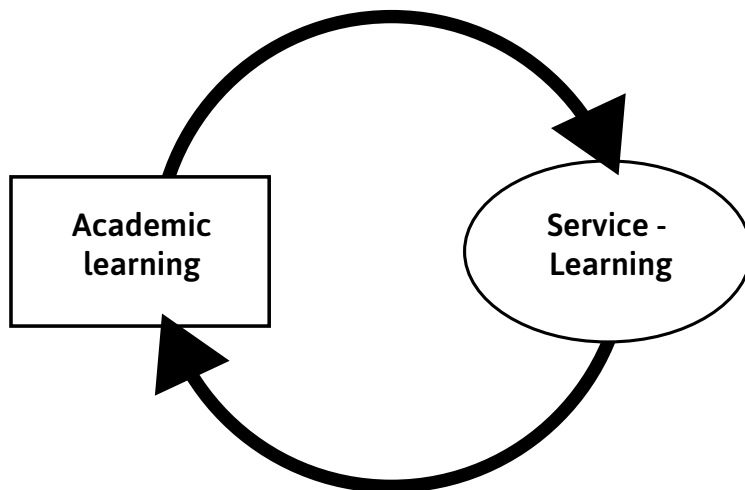
IMAGE 1: The "positive cycle" of service-learning (Tapia, 2007:28)

No great knowledge is needed to organize a food or clothing drive and carry it out in a community setting. However, a solid base of knowledge is required to help organize sustainable initiatives that allow a community to support itself physically and economically.

There are many experiences in Latin America that prove that the more challenging the social issue is, and the greater the impact the intervention has on the community, the higher the motivation students have to investigate and enhance their own learning.
In the words of the Spanish specialist Josep Puig:

In service-learning, knowledge is used to improve something in the community, and service becomes a learning experience that provides knowledge and values. Service and learning become interwoven in a win-win relationship: learning takes on a sense of civic engagement, and service becomes a workshop of values and knowledge (Puig, 2009:9)

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

- **Service-Learning as an Inclusive Pedagogy**

From a traditional point of view, community-service projects are organized by institutions with greater resources and designed to benefit less-privileged populations. In Latin America, however, some of the most significant service-learning initiatives on record have been spearheaded by children, adolescents, and young people in vulnerable conditions, namely students from low-income families and students with disabilities (cf. PwC., 2008) or within prison contexts (cf. Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2006:33).

These are a few examples of service-learning projects developed in our region by students who would traditionally be profiled as recipients of aid, rather than agents of social change:

- Four-year-old children in a rural kindergarten helping replant a burnt native forest with seedlings grown in their school garden[3]
- Children and adolescents with mental disabilities sponsoring public squares in their city and applying their gardening knowledge to maintain flower beds[4]
- Adolescents of Native American heritage contributing to local development by constructing greenhouses for rural schools and families, organizing water conservation projects, and many other initiatives[5]
- Incarcerated youth in prison schools developing instructional materials for special education schools in the region[6].

Not only are students in situations of higher vulnerability capable of organizing extraordinary service-learning projects, they can also see that their involvement leads to very important benefits for their own education.

The Link between Service-Learning and Inclusivity

Although the topic still bears investigation, existing evidence suggests that these initiatives lead to a radical change in attitudes towards young people in more marginalized populations, both within the school and in the greater community. They also lead to higher self-esteem in the children and adolescents involved.

Many service-learning projects help students in vulnerable conditions become aware of their own potential, challenging the expectations of failure and delinquency that so often become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Time and again, we see adolescents who, when given respect and encouragement by adult facilitators, are motivated and empowered to pursue higher education, become involved in productive endeavors, and play an active role in social and political organizations.

Service-learning is inclusive in that it recognizes the transformative capacity of all children and adolescents, regardless of their context or limitations.

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3   School No. 25 "Delia Medici de Chayep", Villa Futalaufquen, Chubut, Argentina (Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2010a:23-26); (PwC., 2008)

4   Centre for Integration and Development, province of Buenos Aires (Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2014:41-46)

5   CEI San Ignacio, Junín de los Andes, Neuquén

6   Secondary School No. 5, Penitentiary Units No. 2, No. 38 and No. 27 (Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2010a:17-22)

Reflection Questions

What types of activities and/or projects carried out at your school promote integration and inclusion? Who participates? Are any centers in your community working in this direction?

Of the positive impacts achieved by service-learning (higher camaraderie within schools, the development of marketable skills, etc.,) which ones would you prioritize for your classes/school? How are these being approached in your classes/school at present?

2.2.2 Solidarity-Based Service Aimed at Meeting Real Needs of the Community

- **The Concept of Solidarity in Latin America and in Central and Eastern European Countries**

Solidarity is the core of the ethical foundation of service-learning as it is considered in Latin America. In this section, we will explore connotations of the concept in Latin America and relate them to interpretations of the term in Central and Eastern European countries, based on impressions conveyed by CLAYSS course participants from these regions. Finally, in order to facilitate a deeper comprehension of our approach, we will introduce the main features of the notion of solidarity that structures the CLAYSS perspective.

Civil society leaders around the world have expressed their concern for the dilution of the term "solidarity" in the current landscape of capitalism. According to them, this idea is too often touted as a slogan empty of meaning or a vague expression of good will. Around the globe, we see corporate campaigns that purport to be solidary and "socially committed," but which in fact are simply marketing strategies to divert attention from unflattering practices such as tax evasion and pollution.

In his analysis of the contemporary practice of solidarity, Bauman (cf. 2013: web) argues that our highly individualized society of consumers fosters mutual suspicion and competition, thus provoking a devaluation of human solidarity. The value of solidarity is rejected and denied in attempts to satisfy personal desires and fulfill personal goals. As the market has assumed an increasingly dominant role in shaping interpersonal relations, the institutions that had traditionally promoted relations based on solidarity have been dismantled, accentuating the fragmentation of social bonds. For example, the deregulation of the labor market has not only diminished workers´ legal protection; it has also weakened workplace relationships, as decreasing job stability discourages establishing close ties with colleagues and fostering mutual responsibility. Bauman points out, however, that alongside the withering of common good evidenced in contemporary societies, there are also "explosions of solidarity," such as the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, which demonstrate that the spirit of solidarity has not vanished and is waiting for the occasion to flourish (Bauman, 2013: web).

In Latin American cultures, the concept may carry diverse connotations: community values of native peoples, religions of Christian origin, the fraternité of the French Revolution that inspired independence movements, and the cooperative organizations introduced by the European immigrants in the early 20th century, to name a few.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

When examining the history of fraternity in our region, however, the path towards Latin American solidarity has not been linear: solidarities "against" or "in favor of" have been frequently stronger than solidarities among equals (Ighina, 2012). Multiple social leaders have pointed out that our peoples are emotionally solidary when faced to immediate needs, but that the feeling has not yet managed to modify the immense gap of injustice and inequality that still divides our region. We make a "call to solidarity" asking for blood donors or aid when there is an earthquake; we speak about "solidarity among union workers" or "calls for international solidarity with peoples overwhelmed by wars or foreign debt". Our immediate and emotional solidarity may take the form of aid actions that humiliate rather than solve, and which serve to evade, rather than accept, social responsibility.

Furthermore, the concept is frequently misconstrued, by everyone from self-proclaimed progressives to noteworthy dictators.

The Spanish word *"solidaridad"* is easily translated into Portuguese *("solidariedade")*, French *("solidarité")*, and Italian *("solidarietà")*, not just literally, but also in terms of its cultural meaning. The same is true even in Polish: Solidarnosc was the name chosen for the first free union under the communist regime by Lech Walesa, an icon for many South American union leaders who had to struggle against military governments during the 1980s.

How is solidarity interpreted in Central and Eastern countries? Participants of CLAYSS courses have commented that in this region, the term "solidarity" is associated with a top-down practice imposed on society by the state and enforced through different mechanisms, which vary along with the different manifestations of communist regimes: volunteerism, the tax system, etc. Given that solidarity is associated with imposed practices, rather than a genuine act stemming from free will or a sense of reciprocity, the negative connotations are unsurprising.

In current times, the word "solidarity" in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) appears to still be used on a macro level to refer to the social policies that guarantee the provision of services and social security within the society. On a micro level, solidarity may be regarded as additional support from families, NGOs, charities, or volunteers. In general, however, the word is not used colloquially due to the negative associations mentioned above. Instead, the word "care" has been identified by members of the activities as an alternative that may represent similar values to solidarity, with a more widely accepted usage. In some regions, the expression may have a positive resonance, as it can be related to the Solidarity movement in Poland that protested against Communism. In those areas, the dimensions to what or to whom "solidarity" is being exercised must be specified: solidarity with certain social groups, certain ideas, attitudes, decision-making processes, etc.

During the years that followed the transition from the Communist regime to capitalism, certain changes have been observed in people's values and behaviours. Similarly to institutional changes, citizens started to become increasingly more drawn to the private sphere (their personal and family issues) than to the collective one.

However, there is evidence that people do work together for common causes, or at least they have started to do so in more recent years. The following examples of collective action have been pointed out by the participants: protests against illegal mining and deforestation, initiatives to promote literacy and participation in cultural and recreational activities, especially oriented to children, etc. However, these are exceptions: in many other areas within the region, civic engagement is still lacking and has been identified as an issue in need of attention and encouragement.

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In the broader European context, values such as active citizenship or civic engagement are promoted by European Union institutions. Likewise, volunteering is regarded as a major force nurturing civil society and strengthening solidarity, as well as an essential component in supporting community development programs. (European Parliament, 2008) In this respect, the European Parliament (2008: 13) encourages Member States and regional and local authorities to recognize the value of volunteering[7] in promoting social and economic cohesion; furthermore, it encourages them "...to promote volunteering through education at all levels, creating opportunities for voluntary activity at an early stage in the education system so that it is seen as normal contribution to community life and to continue to promote such activity as students grow older, to facilitate 'services learning' where students work with voluntary or community groups in partnership as part of their diploma or degree course, to encourage links between the voluntary sector and the education sector at all levels and to promote volunteering and recognise learning in volunteering as part of lifelong learning."

In this sense, examining familiar terms such as "care" or "active citizenship" could be a starting point for approaching service-learning. Below we will highlight the main features of the concept of solidarity that are most consistent with service-learning as we conceive of it.

• **What Do We Mean by "Solidarity"?**

I. Solidarity and Service

In the 1980s, when the concept of "service-learning" began to spread to Latin America from the United States, experts first agreed that the English-language term "service" did not include the richness of the experience encapsulated by the term "*solidaridad*" in our cultural framework.

In the strongly individualistic tradition of Northern-hemisphere cultures, "service" is generally associated with individual motivation and self-determination. In fact, in the United States, it is possible to encounter service-learning projects designed and carried out by one student, with each student taking a different topic, a practice less frequent in our region.

This individualistic idea of service to others, founded on "giving to others" and "caring about" others (care) may easily establish an asymmetrical relationship between the giver and the recipient of the "service", a vertical trajectory that can lead to unexamined and patronizing practices.

Moreover, the regular use of the word "service" in Spanish ("servicio") is frequently linked to different forms of servitude. Ranging from serfdoms imposed by native empires and European imperialism to domestic service, compulsory military service, and the intelligence service during dictatorships, there are many "services" in our continent that have nothing in common with solidarity.

When we use the term "service-learning", on the one hand, we recognize the positive connotations that the word "service" has in many traditions and contexts. On the other hand, however, we are qualifying it to clarify that we are making reference to solidarity service in particular:

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7   The European Solidarity Corps (European Youth Portal), for example, is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. For further information please refer to: *https://europa.eu/youth/soliDarity_en*

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

"It means helping others in an organized and effective way, working together for the common cause, standing as a group or as a nation to defend rights and face natural disasters or economic crises" (Tapia, 2003b: 143).

The service-learning we propose has to do with genuine encounters, with the recognition and promotion of human rights, with reciprocal generosity and collective, intelligent work for a common cause, as detailed below.

II. Solidarity as an Encounter

Aranguren defines solidarity as an encounter – the approach that we believe is closest to the service-learning philosophy – with these words:

"(...) solidarity as an encounter allows the recipients of the action to be active participants in the process of fighting for justice, resolving the challenges they face, and achieving personal and collective autonomy". Aranguren, (1997)

A real encounter creates the necessary trust to work collaboratively. It involves the communication of interests and objectives and facilitates multidimensional projects rather than unilateral actions.

This approach applied to service-learning projects involves teaching young people to listen carefully to one another without prejudice, and helping them reflect about their role, not just as "donors", but also as "recipients" of the wisdom and experience of their community partners, and as "beneficiaries" because the experience has been enriching.

III. Solidarity, Rights, and Responsibilities

Solidarity understood as an encounter rather than as charity is rooted in the recognition of the other as an equal, as a subject entitled to inalienable rights.

In Latin America, transition processes towards democracy initiated in the early 1980s have encouraged human rights education. Many educational systems have made great progress in teaching students their rights and empowering them to defend their rights and the rights of others. Service-learning pedagogy builds upon this progress, supporting a critical view of current systems and the necessity of demanding effective exercise of rights.

It also facilitates practical education on the responsibility associated with the exercise of human rights (Aquini, 2006). From a service-learning perspective, children and adolescents living in conditions of vulnerability have the right to be considered capable of assuming the necessary responsibilities to be protagonists of the efforts to change their situation.

An examination of solidarity from a human rights perspective recognizes the need to hold governments accountable for the guarantee and protection of citizens' rights. This responsibility cannot and must not be assumed solely by individuals or civil society organizations. Realistically, it also recognizes the necessary contributions of the citizens, educational institutions and social organizations.

Service-learning experiences, in this sense, offer the possibility of positive and responsible contribution to a common good without seeking to overlap with or replace the responsibilities of the state in guaranteeing and safeguarding human rights.

IV. From "Vertical Philanthropy to "Horizontal Solidarity"

The understanding of solidarity as the encounter, with recognition of fundamental human rights is defined by some authors as "horizontal solidarity." It is clearly differentiated from the traditional vision of "vertical" or naïve solidarity, which tends to be focused on charitable activities or government assistance. This is based on a traditional and conservative vision of "those in need," which is aimed at assisting them with a "vertical" or downward movement, and which can be characterized by patronizing or condescending attitudes.
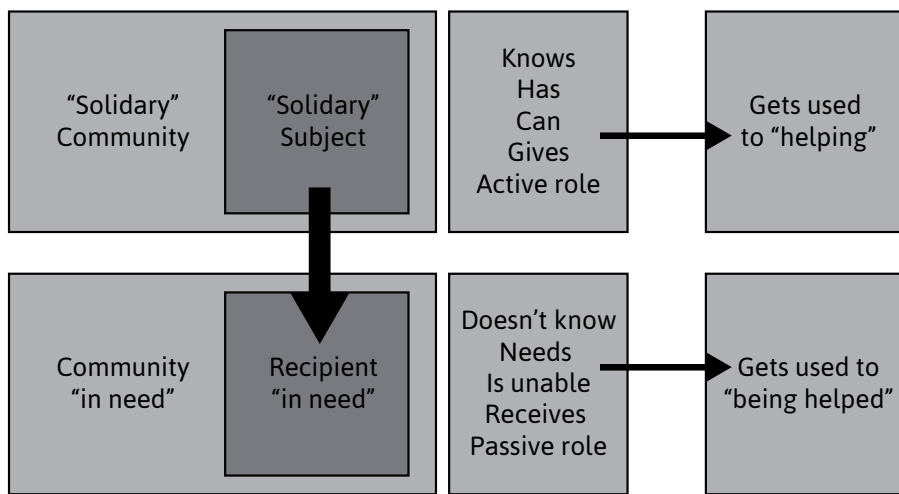
IMAGE 2: "Vertical" Solidarity

From this point of view, the people or communities belonging to the first group see themselves as active subjects, as those who have knowledge, services, or resources to give and who play the active role in the solidary action.

This places the people and communities who receive the attention in the role of passive recipients, those who are "in need," who lack knowledge, ability, and resources, and whose only role is that of receiving and being grateful. This type of vertical solidarity relegates the beneficiaries to being passive recipients, thereby leading to dependence and reproducing the cycle of poverty and exclusion.
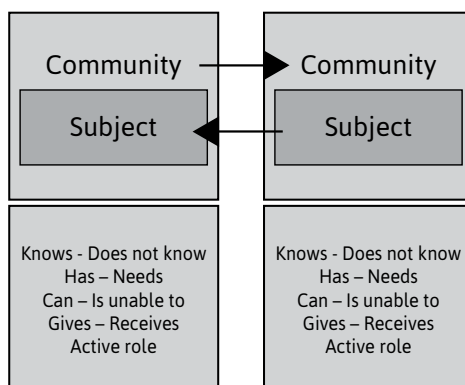
IMAGE 3 : "Horizontal" Solidarity

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

Service-learning aims to move beyond the vertical model, since it recognizes the dignity of all people and communities, and acknowledges the right to real encounters and horizontal relationships.

Horizontal solidarity is based not only in the recognition and value of the identity and dignity of others, but also in the realistic acceptance that, even in scenarios of differing economic or cultural resources, we all have something to receive and learn from others, we are all capable of giving and receiving, and, that there is always something that we do not know about the other's reality that he or she can teach us.

In order to perform horizontal solidarity, we need to be able to think critically, to learn how to approach multiple, complex causalities and problems, and to simultaneously reflect on the individual, collective, socioeconomic, environmental and political dimensions of the activities.

Adopting this model allows for concrete results when organizing service-learning projects because the idea is not to give the community what the educational institution assumes it needs, or what is suitable for the institution to give, but rather to establish collaborative work with the subjects and existing community organizations, developing and assessing the projects together.

Within a horizontal solidarity model, service-learning projects should emphasize:

- Sharing rather than "helping"
- Learning from others
- Building reciprocal, egalitarian relationships
- Acknowledging the equal dignity of all participants in the project, regardless of background or socioeconomic status
- Developing a sense of fraternity
- Sharing the protagonist role in project design and implementation
- Encouraging those with fewer resources (economic, educational, or otherwise) to consider themselves capable of developing solidary initiatives

V. Solidarity and Pro-Social attitudes

Thinking of solidarity as an encounter with others implies contributing to the development of students' empathy and pro-social attitudes.

Pro-social behavior emphasizes the bonds between those involved and seeks to assess the response to the need based on the role of the "recipient" and the quality of the bond developed.

From a pro-social perspective, in a service-learning project we aim from the outset to engage in dialogue with community leaders about their needs and expectations, and to assess with them whether the activities of the students meet the objectives and the expectations established.

The pro-social perspective makes clear that the most important thing is not "feeling good" or "being a good person" because of the social action performed, but making sure that the people you were supposed to help have effectively found their need satisfied.

Pro-social attitudes also challenge the educational institution to operate outside their comfort zone and consider whether what they want to offer to the community is really what the community needs and wants.

•   **The Three Dimensions of Intelligent Solidarity**

As the old saying goes, "Give a man fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime". There is great wisdom in this phrase, because it stresses the protagonist role and the development of abilities in socially excluded people, rather than the repetition of the situations that may reinforce their dependency.

As true as the saying is, one grassroots leader commented that "sometimes you need to eat first because you are not strong enough to lift the fishing rod, and if there is no sea or lake around, there is no use in teaching somebody how to fish because they will not have anywhere to fish".

This realistic comment leads us to identify the three elements symbolizing the possible dimensions or categories of solidarity service offered in service-learning projects.

Exchange and transfer of knowledge

Direct care:
delivery of goods or services

Awareness campaigns

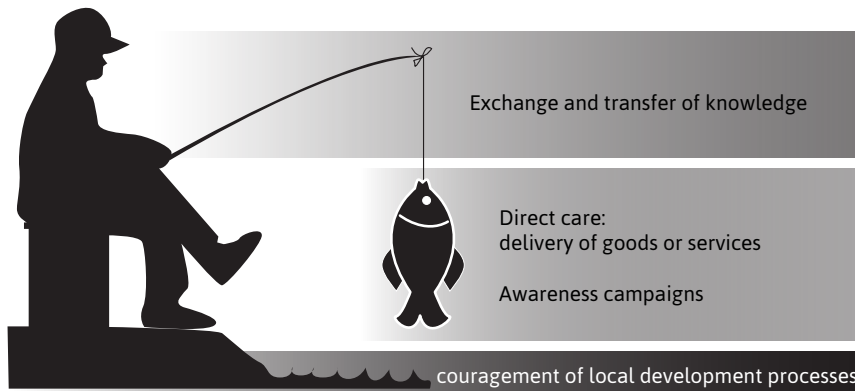couragement of local development processes

IMAGE 4: The fishing rod, the fish and the lake: the three dimensions of intelligent solidarity

In this metaphor, the fish symbolizes the goods and services offered in direct response to emergencies, and also the awareness campaigns, which, instead of goods, give information that may or may not be relevant to or understood by the target population. The fishing rod represents the exchange or transfer of knowledge that allows the subjects to resolve their problems autonomously. Finally, the sea or the lake makes reference to the territories or communities, and to the need to encourage local development processes aimed at addressing the common good of an entire population.

Some simplistic views usually consider these three types of service as mutually exclusive, when in the reality of the social action they are necessarily complementary and simultaneous strategies.

The link between solidarity action and educational content allows more precise diagnoses of social problems, as specific knowledge is being applied and transferred when understanding social realities. It also facilitates a process of reflection throughout the development of genuine solidarity bonds. Service-learning projects can also help to address complex issues in the classroom, such as the structural causes of poverty, difficulties in intercultural/international relations within one country or region, and the violation of basic rights, using an approach that moves beyond emotional and nonsystematic interventions and aims to progress towards more complex and effective projects.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

> ## Reflection Questions
>
> How does the idea of "solidarity," as considered by CLAYSS in Latin America, compare and contrast with your idea of solidarity?
>
> What, if any, are the impressions of solidarity described by CLAYSS course participants from Central and Eastern Europe that resonate most strongly with you? Why?
>
> Have you ever participated in projects or activities in service of the community? What is your perception about the kind of relationship developed between the organization and the community?
>
> Open dialogue with your colleagues and students: what kinds of experiences, impressions, concepts, and terms resonate with the meaning of solidarity proposed, and which terms would be most adequate in your culture?

2.2.3 The Active Role of Students in Project Design, Implementation, and Evaluation

We have already mentioned that the role of students as protagonists is one of the defining features of any service-learning project. The degree of autonomy will of course depend on the students' age, increasing over time, but it is key in any project and at any of stage of project development.

International organizations, national legislations, and institutional education projects often identify students' "engaged citizenship" and "active participation in society" as one of the main objectives of any educational system. However, the idea of having children or young people as protagonists is sometimes viewed with suspicion – or even panic – by those who still view education as a process more centered on the educator than on the learner, and who prefer discipline to education. At the other end of the spectrum, the "protagonist role" and "autonomy" of children and adolescents can be misconstrued as an argument for excessive permissiveness. Educators might prioritize the affection of their students over establishing limits and prompts to guide learning.

Many teachers thus find themselves torn between preserving discipline and stimulating creativity, between authoritativeness and permissiveness, between the argument for "support" and the argument for "demand." Granting students a more active role is often at odds with traditional teaching practices, for all that it may be considered a desirable objective. Educators who wish to put this idea into practice often lack viable frameworks and institutional support for doing so.

The service-learning proposal offers strategies to educators in this situation. These strategies will support educators in creating the necessary structures for a learning environment, while still allowing for greater agency on the part of children and adolescents.

Adults' View of Children and Adolescents

The attitude educators have towards their students is hugely impactful in any service-learning project, as is the extent to which students are permitted to assume active responsibilities.

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

Teachers may find it challenging to engage in open dialogue with their students. Yet doing so is vital, not only in service of the expected "results" of the project, but also for shaping the nature of youth engagement throughout the process.

Misconceptions of youth and negative stereotypes of adolescents are as pervasive now as ever. Youth and adolescents are considered to be inhibited by the discomfort of self-actualization, too apathetic to act in service of the greater community. They are viewed as potential delinquents, expected to lash out impulsively, as distractible, likely seek out instant gratification with no regard for consequences, and as intrinsically defiant and oppositional. Alternatively, they are idealized as the leaders of tomorrow, a force for social transformation – but always at some future point, removed from the present time. These labels fail to acknowledge youth as competent social actors in their own right (cf. del Campo, 2013). Additionally, they invisibilize the engagement and solidarity of youth who do not fit these stereotypes (cf. Tapia, 2004).

Almost fifty years ago, research by Rosenthal and Jacobson on the "Pygmalion effect" showed that teachers' expectations of students' abilities have a decisive impact on the effective development of said abilities (cf. Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In other words, if we believe that our students are capable of learning, they are more likely to learn than if we decide on the first day of school that the kids in the back of the classroom will never learn enough to pass the course. The "Pygmalion Effect" of teachers' high expectations of students remains one of the most powerful and least recognized reasons for educational success in schools that perform well despite difficult circumstances.

Some evidence suggests that the Pygmalion effect is also applicable to service-learning projects. In 2004, quantitative research performed by CLAYSS on the 6,100 submissions to the Premio Presidencial "Escuelas Solidarias[8]" competition in Argentina showed that schools leading service-learning projects were not limited to any single socioeconomic segment: they were both public and private, large and small, urban and rural, with more privileged students and more vulnerable students, in the same proportion as the national average. Since then, hundreds of teacher interviews have led us to this conclusion: what differentiates service-learning schools from others is teachers who believe that their students are capable of solidarity work, of engaging in small- or large-scale community initiatives. In short, these schools have students whose teachers trust them.

One stereotype dismantled through service-learning projects is that of children and youth as the "future generation." In solidarity projects – as in so many other situations in which youth are allowed protagonist roles – it becomes evident that they are today's generation, that they are builders of the present, and not merely "tomorrow's hope." When their visions, dreams and drive for change are encouraged by the school, with support from teachers and administrators, they are able to carry out their ideas through concrete projects. Their research projects and social initiatives go beyond theoretical assignments and term papers and become tangible (cf. del Campo, 2013: 6).

It is a chicken-and-egg scenario: do the trust and optimism of the teachers awaken students' solidary protagonist role, or do the generosity and enthusiasm of students awaken teachers' optimism? The fact is that in the schools that have been developing good service-learning projects for years, the trust of the teachers and the solidary protagonist role of the students reflect and build upon each other, motivating both teachers and students.

Learning through Projects: Learning Focused on the Subject who Learns

Service-learning practices are a way of learning through projects; as such, the learning

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8   A national award organized by the Ministry of Education that recognizes the solidarity initiatives of primary and secondary schools in Argentina

activities must have the students as protagonists and must be focused on their interests, with the teacher as an observer or coach who helps unlock the student's potential.

"Project methodology allows the students to be the protagonist of their own learning (...) through their active involvement and the acquisition of new knowledge based on the knowledge they already have (meaningful learning), to reflect and to make use of them in other social or communicative contexts (functional learning) (cf. Díaz Perea & Muñoz Muñoz, 2009)

In service-learning projects, children and young people have the opportunity to get involved in their community context, developing meaningful and functional learning both inside and outside of the classroom. As mentioned above, experience shows that motivation towards solidarity work strengthens self-esteem and interest in learning and cultivating new knowledge.

Ladder of Participation

In the service-learning model, it is not enough to have the children in action. It is necessary to ask whether they are indeed developing a true experience of personal commitment and participation.

When considering a solidarity project, it might seem simplest to leave the planning to teachers, school administrators, or community leaders, handing the project to the students once it is set up. This may be faster and more practical for adults, but it is not real service-learning. No one learns to be an active citizen following others' directions and developing other people's projects.

Experience shows that if students lack a sense of "ownership" of the project during its early stages, they will remain too dependent on the adults to fully develop their leadership potential.

One of the most valuable and long-lasting achievements in service-learning projects is that the children develop management and leadership skills, learn organizing strategies, and increase social and cultural competence. These are precisely the objectives least often achieved in the traditional classroom.

To address the concepts of youth participation and protagonist role, it may be useful to use the metaphor of a "ladder" of participation. Roger Hart defines participation as the process of sharing decisions which are recognised in the social environment and which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives (cf. Hart, 1993).

Youth's protagonism role	Share management Make decisions Accepted proposals
Participation	Present initiatives They are consulted
No participation	Receive information Attend (symbolic) Manipulation
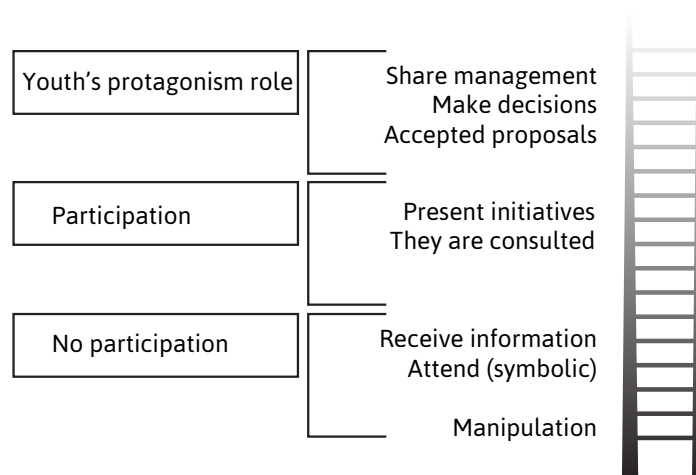
IMAGE 5: Participation and child and youth participation (cf. Hart, 1993)

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

Typology	Content
Manipulation	Students do not understand the project in which they participate or what they do.
Decoration	Students participation is used in a decorative way. They do not understand their participation.
Symbolic participation	Students participate but their opinions have no impact and are not taken into account.
Assigned but informed participation	Students do not participate in the planning but they understand and are aware of the actions proposed to them.
Consulted and informed participation	Students are consulted about their participation in a given project. Their ideas are taken into account.
Participation in projects initiated by adults but whose decisions are shared by students	Students participate in decision making of projects initiated by adults.
Participation in projects initiated and directed by the students themselves	Students initiate and lead the projects, whereas adults participate facilitating the process.
Participation in projects initiated by students in which decisions are shared with adults	Students decide to involve adults in the decision-making process.

Child and youth participation is to "...collaborate, contribute and cooperate for common progress, and to build self-confidence and initiative in children and young people. Moreover, they are placed as social subjects with the ability to express their opinions and decisions about directly affecting matters in the family, the school and the society in general" (Apud, 2003: 4).

In short, in a service-learning project, students should not only be informed and consulted with, but they should also establish project ownership at the early planning stage.

Reflection Questions

Consider Hart´s metaphor of the ladder in relation to children and youth participation. Can you think of any project developed in your school/classroom in which the students assumed an active role? In which level of the ladder would their level of participation be positioned? Why? What changes would you introduce to help them climb up the ladder?

In this section, we have mentioned some stereotypes of young people. Are any of these common in your context? Which ones? Can you mention an experience in your school/classroom that dismantled any of these stereotypes? Why do you think that was possible?

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

2.2.4 Learning Contents, Solidarity Service, and the Development of Student Competencies

Service-learning projects intentionally promote a link between learning contents (theory) and solidarity service (practice in service of the community). This link generates synergies that allow students to relate to knowledge, to teachers, and to their community in novel ways. Service-learning practices enable students to develop cognitively and emotionally in contexts alternative to those of traditional models. They also facilitate the development of competencies necessary for participating with autonomy and civic responsibility in increasingly complex societies.

• **Solidarity Service-Learning and the Approach to Knowledge**

Institutions prioritizing the transmission of encyclopedic knowledge perpetuate a vertical and unidirectional model from the 19th century, in which teachers are conceived as the sole possessors of knowledge. The students' role is limited to listening and absorbing information, while the interrelation of ideas is assigned secondary importance. This model reflects a paradigm in which science is considered to be neutral and ascetic, theory is valued over practice, and schools are viewed as ivory towers isolated from reality.

Solidarity service-learning challenges this vertical and unidirectional model. In the pedagogy of service-learning, knowledge is viewed as a social good and a contribution to a more just and equitable world. From this perspective, learning is not aimed towards the exclusive fostering of individual development, but towards the construction of the common good. Service-learning practices, therefore, move away from the traditional encyclopedic approach by favoring a close link between theory and practice. They seek to identify knowledge relevant to the resolution of real-life problems encountered beyond the walls of the classroom. Service-learning adopts a dialogical pedagogical model in which knowledge is co-constructed between students, teachers and the community.

The frequent need for multidisciplinary approaches to social problems would imply an approximation of more complex epistemological paradigms informed by current scientific developments such as the "participatory action research" (Fals Borda, 1987) or "research based in the community" (Escrigas et al., 2014; Munck, McIlrath, Hall, & Tandon, 2014).

These new perspectives on knowledge production are gaining force in current educational systems. Emphasis on the social responsibility of universities and their engagement with community, regional, and national development has acquired increasing prominence at the higher education level. It has gained traction in elementary and secondary educational models as well, albeit to a lesser extent.

• **Developing Competences**

From a cognitive point of view, the purpose of teaching is to promote students' development of the structures for comprehension, expression, communication and performance that are necessary in order to participate actively and autonomously in complex societies. Such an objective requires a change in the traditional approach to learning. Rather than the acquisition of knowledge and independent concrete abilities in isolation from the context, the learning process should favor learners' active participation in an educational context (cf. Pérez Gómez, 2007: 24).

Pérez Gómez (cf. 2007: 14) highlights the interrelatedness of competencies, as they

integrate external demands and internal attributes: subjects´ emotions, values, attitudes, and the singularities of the contexts in which they act. A competency can also be defined as a harmonious and cohesive combination of different types of knowledge: to be, to know, to do, and to live together. When students engage their competencies, they mobilize practical knowledge in the action, for the action and on the action (cf. Vila & Santamaría, 2011: 21)[9] .

Service-learning projects – which we will explore in the next section – facilitate the link between the learning contents (theory) and service (practice in service of the community) through the cross-cutting processes of reflection, systematization and evaluation. Through different teaching strategies, in which teachers provide guidance and feedback, students undertake intentional reflection in the action, for the action, and on the action (Schon, 1992) leading to the progressive construction of competencies.

Perrenoud (2008) argues that competencies develop through the creation of a set of mental schemas that allow students to mobilize knowledge in specific situations, at useful times and in effective ways. The author points out that learning should be associated with a social practice meaningful to the students. When knowledge is viewed as a stepping-stone to receiving a degree, it will be much more promptly forgotten than if it is viewed as a competency applicable to meeting real-life challenges. Furthermore, when knowledge is applied to resolve real conflicts, an intrinsic motivation to learn prevails as the knowledge has a clear value and use (Bernstein, 1993 quoted in Pérez Gómez, 2007). Peer cooperation and the work with community members are also essential to foster motivation and to stimulate contrast, doubt and argumentation (Elliott, 1996, quoted in Pérez Gómez, 2007).

While participating in service-learning projects, students approach real-life problems and construct competencies oriented to develop the four pillars of education established by UNESCO in the Delors report (1996):

Learn to know: When dealing with social problems, students have to reflect, doubt, and adapt as quickly as possible to uncertain scenarios. At the same time, they question their social reality by developing critical thinking. Through dialogue and interaction with teachers, peers and community members, learners develop a capacity for self-reflection that can then be applied to their own knowledge: how they learn; what they know; and what they need to know to offer feasible solutions to the problem identified. This prompts a process of self-knowledge, stimulating their metacognition, their capacity to comprehend and regulate their own singular process of learning (Pérez Gómez, 2007). It also fosters students' autonomy and motivation to continue benefitting from the opportunities of lifelong learning, honing their competencies and adapting them to changing realities.

Learn to do: In service-learning, students carry out a wide range of activities that bring together the learning contents of the different courses involved in solidarity projects, such as conducting research activities, connecting with local institutions, implementing prevention and awareness campaigns on health, education, and environmental issues, teaching and peer tutoring, translating materials into different languages, producing educational materials, and recovering historical and cultural heritage, to name a few. These activities encourage students to develop competencies oriented towards collaborative and creative work, effective communication, informed decision-making and active participation in their community. Furthermore, students who are allowed to take the lead on different tasks are encouraged to become more resourceful and take more initiative, not only with regard to service-leading, but in other personal, academic, and professional pursuits as well.

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9   Ballester Vila and Sánchez Santamaría approach this concept in "Pedagogical dimension of competency-based approach in compulsory education" (2011) They also refer to the works of Pérez Gómez (2007) and (Schon (1992)).

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 2

Learn to be: The systematic reflection of the values inherent to community services fosters the development of resilience and prosociality that will allow students to face difficulties and be transformed positively by them. Students' active participation in these projects promotes student empowerment, self-esteem, motivation, and commitment to the community and to their own learning processes.

Learn to live together: A pedagogical model based on dialogue fosters horizontal solidarity. It recognizes the equal rights of all and deepens awareness of the responsibilities and obligations involved in the defense and promotion of those rights. As students collaborate on projects with people from different backgrounds, they learn to cooperate, solve conflicts and come to agreements while respecting differences in opinion. Competencies of teamwork and the capacity to participate actively and democratically in diverse social groups are encouraged.

Developing students' competencies within the framework of service-learning projects changes the traditional roles of students and teachers and their relation to knowledge. Thus it also changes relationship between schools and communities.

Teachers:
- They tutor students' learning processes. This involves: planning, organizing, stimulating, accompanying, evaluating and regulating their learning processes. Although they are the pedagogical coordinators of the projects, their priority is to promote the development of leadership competencies among their students.
- They do not necessarily take the role of experts in dealing with the social issue in question. In general, that responsibility is left to specialists or appropriate members of the community. However, teachers must ensure that the processes developed throughout the projects are formative. They are responsible for establishing the connection between the learning contents and community service through reflection, systematization, and formative evaluation.
- They stimulate students' metacognition and self-awareness.
- They promote an accepting environment in which learners are free to experiment and err, and they support students in their singular learning processes.
- Students:
- They are involved in the collective effort of project development, such as researching, implementing, and communicating knowledge to solve problems.
- They perform meta-cognitive and meta-communicative exercises as they explain reasoning processes and become aware of the ways in which they comprehend, memorize, and communicate.
- They are accountable to third parties, fostering ties of solidarity with the community.

Relationship between Schools and Communities:
Service-learning projects foster a relationship in which schools and their communities are both open to working collaboratively. Conceptions of town and gown erode as students learn within and outside of the classroom [10]. They learn not only from their peers and teachers but also from community members. They are evaluated both at school and at the social organizations with which they collaborate. Through activities oriented towards bringing students closer to a participatory action-research approach, knowledge is constructed collectively and reciprocally with the community.

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10 Solidarity service-learning pedagogy shares common goals with the proposals of "International educating cities" (International association of educating cities, 2004) and "The city of children" (Tonucci, 2009)

- **Different Ways to Link Learning Contents and Solidarity Practice**

There are many possibilities for connecting learning contents to practices in service of the community:

- One project, one subject: the projects are geared toward one specific theme, and a teacher with the whole class group or with volunteers within the group develops the activities

- One project, various areas or subjects: depending on the willingness of various participants and the complexity of the situation, it might make sense to design an interdisciplinary project. This may evolve from a necessity to address complex problems or as a result of new demands from society. In other cases, projects are conceived as multidisciplinary from the very beginning.

- Various projects, various areas or subjects: service-learning projects become part of the institutional culture. A diversity of projects develops in different class groups, each of them with their own interdisciplinary networks.

Reflection Questions

Teachers identify and analyze an experience of their own context. They identify learning contents that are connected to practice in service of the community and the competencies students are encouraged to construct in the process. They also reflect on the possible links between the learning contents they teach at their schools and the community service described in the experience.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

3.1   Key Participants in Service-Learning Projects

Service-learning is, by definition, active and experiential. Students are therefore key participants in service-learning projects from start to finish, from the planning stage through its development to evaluation after its completion.

Educators are also key participants, as they are responsible for setting the project's objectives, both academic and service-based, together with their students and the community. Educators motivate students and guide their actions and their search for alternative solutions along the "itinerary". Educators are also responsible for leading the main three cross-cutting processes (discussed in greater detail in Part 3.6), and facilitating consistent reflection aimed at correcting mistakes and optimizing actions. Additionally, they keep records and handle communications so as to generate visibility and build alliances. Throughout the entire process, they plan and guide permanent and joint assessments of personal, group, and community satisfaction goals related to the action in progress.

Naturally, **school principals** are key participants with regard to projects' sustainability and continuity. As the values of service-learning influence the roles inherent to school administration, principals are able to:

- Explain to the community the reasons why service-learning projects are carried out and their pedagogical goals.
- Establish partnerships and other formal relationships with civil society organizations or governmental agencies for the service-learning project.
- Conduct project follow-ups and lay down communication mechanisms at an intra-institutional level.
- Monitor institutional safety and responsibility issues for students' field visits.
- Grant appropriate certification and accreditation when applicable
- Appoint one or more educators to be in charge of project management and monitoring, especially to support teachers who are implementing these projects for the first time (cf. Tapia, 2006: 34-35).

3.2 Service-Learning Quadrants in Educational Institutions

It is not always easy to differentiate service-learning practices from other community engagement activities developed in educational environments. We think it could be useful to introduce the "Service-learning quadrants" tool, originally developed by the Stanford University, and adapted to the Argentine experience (cf.Giorgetti, 2007; Service Learning Center, 1996; Tapia, 2000:28; Tapia, 2006: 26 and ss).
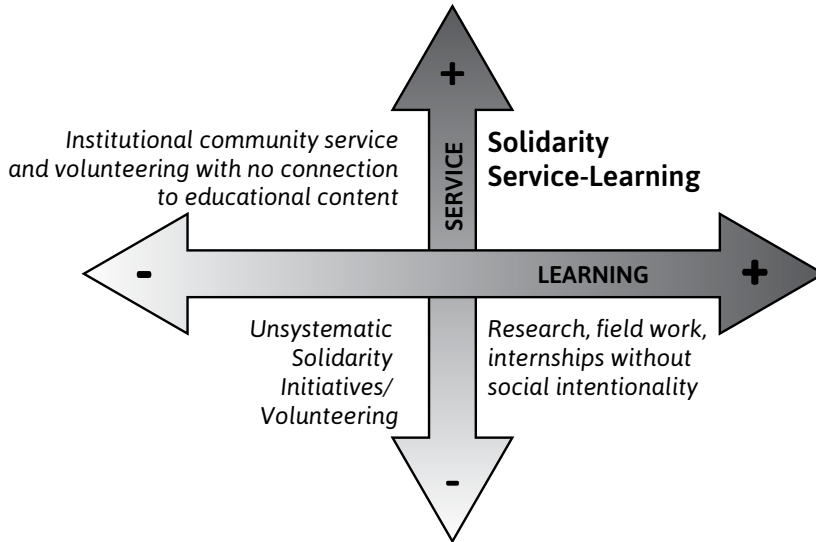

IMAGE 6: Service-learning quadrants

Source: Own adaptation of the quadrants published by Service-learning 2000 Center, Stanford University, California, 1996. See: TAPIA, 2006:26; CLAYSS, 2013

The **vertical axis** of the chart refers to the higher or lower quality of solidarity service offered to the community, whereas the **horizontal axis** indicates the higher or lower level of integration of formal and systematic academic learning with the service activity carried out.

The axes delimit the four "quadrants", from which **four types of educational approaches are possible** (cf. Tapia, 2006: 27 and ss).

Identifying the quadrant in which experiences are included helps to determine the steps which must be taken in order to convert said experience into a real service-learning initiative.

I. Field Trips/Internships/Problem-Based-Learning (PBL): research activities and practices in which students engage with a real situation in their community, but only as an object of study. They may apply and develop knowledge and skills in real contexts and learn about reality, but without any intention to change said reality or to develop solidarity bonds. The project is designed to primarily benefit the students. Emphasis is made on learning acquisition and contact with reality is instrumental.

To qualify as service-learning, these experiences would include a solidarity objective and develop activities to that end.

II. Unsystematic Solidarity Initiatives/Volunteering: occasional activities which are promoted and developed separately, with little or no connection to educational contents. They are motivated by a sense of altruism or philanthropy, and teach the "wrong" lesson. They are "unsystematic" as they occur occasionally, address a specific need for a limited period of time, and are not planned at an institutional level. They are designed to

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

primarily benefit a specific community. The emphasis is on addressing a need rather than generating an educational experience. Participation tends to be voluntary, and students' levels of engagement and learning are not assessed, either formally or informally.

To qualify as service-learning, these experiences would connect to educational content, be methodical and sustainable over time, define goals, assess achievements, and benefit the students and the target communities equally.

However, it bears mention that unsystematic solidarity initiatives – even the briefest of them – can be educational for students if they:

- encourage community engagement and solidarity attitudes,
- promote sensitivity towards social or environmental problems starting in kindergarten or elementary school
- establish an institutional culture of receptivity to examining social issues and training students in basic management skills.

III. Institutional Community Service and Volunteering: activities that are formally carried out and are an explicit part of the institutional mission. They entail a deliberate decision to promote the value of solidarity, and develop service and social commitment and citizen engagement attitudes in the students.

Although community service is an effective strategy when it comes to values education, due to ethical principles or religious belief such learning is not always incorporated in course contents. They can be voluntary or mandatory, are formally taken on by the educational management and are an explicit part of the institutional offer.

Many of these experiences are vital in assisting underprivileged communities, and they include food, health, and learning support activities. Service is maintained over time, offered sustainably, and of higher quality. These experiences do impact students' personal development, although this development is not necessarily related to academic material.

To qualify as service-learning, these experiences would connect to academic learning, systematize the project's actions, define goals, assess achievements, determine levels of satisfaction and impact, and benefit the students and the target communities equally.

IV. Service-Learning – Experiences, Practices and Programs:
- simultaneously address learning and service goals for the community;
- simultaneously offer high quality service and a high degree of integration with formal learning;
- enable students embrace their learning processes and become the protagonists in all the stages of the project;
- regard the target community as a co-protagonist of the project, in a reciprocal and equal relationship with the students and teachers;
- are continuous over time.

Robert Sigmon (cf. 1994) explains that, even in projects that meet the criteria to be considered service-learning projects, the emphasis on the learning or community action objectives may be different, as well as the connections among them.

s-**L**	Service and learning objectives are disconnected from one another and they are little relevant.
S-l	Learning objectives are a priority, and service objectives are secondary.
s-**L**	Service objectives are a priority, and learning objectives are secondary.
S-L	Service and learning are strongly connected and they are equal in significance and quality; they empower one another.

IMAGE 7: Different emphases on service-learning practices (based on R. Sigmon, 1994)

The establishment of a "positive cycle" between what happens in the classroom and what happens in the community is one of the key components of a good service-learning project's identity. Numerous investigations show that this combination is what produces the positive effects in students' academic knowledge and comprehensive education.

Differences between Aid Practices and Social Change Practices

The differences between aid practices and social change practices can be examined taking several factors into account. In the chart below, they are sorted by the type of problems they address, time, service quality, recipients, and sustainability (cf. CLAYSS, 2016a: 22):

AID PRACTICES	SOCIAL CHANGE PRACTICES
Address emerging problems	Address structural problems
Short term	Mid- to long term
Distribute goods	Develop skills and resources
Recipients can be passive	Requires recipients to be involved and active participants
Sustainability based on service providers	Sustainability based on recipients' material and human resources

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

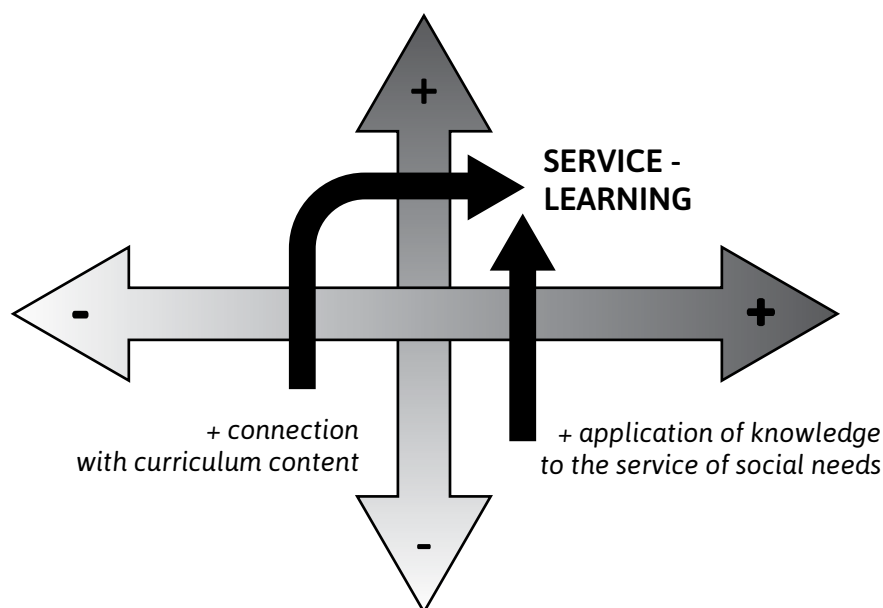## 3.3   Transitions to Service-Learning

IMAGE 8: Transitions to Service-Learning

Based on experiences developed by Argentine schools, we have identified possible ways to design service-learning projects, transitioning from a variety of educational and solidarity practices. It has become clear that many of the most successful experiences have emerged from transition processes based on the tradition and culture of the educational institution. Schools that lean towards unsystematic solidarity campaigns or institutional community services have started to develop more complex community engagement projects. Institutions with a strong scientific influence, with a culture of applied learning in contexts such as Science Fairs, have considered adapting those practices to address community problems.

Some educational institutions develop projects that, from the outset, connect learning and solidarity actions; some others may need gradual transitions in order to develop service-learning solidarity educational experiences. (cf. Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2008: 12-13).

Though there are many possible transitions, we will identify the three most significant, in general terms:

- From unsystematic or occasional solidarity initiatives to an institutionalized solidarity service.
- From institutional community service and volunteering to service-learning.
- From learning activities (field visits, internships, problem-based learning (PBL) to service-learning.

From unsystematic or occasional solidarity initiatives to an institutionalized solidarity service: "Institutionalized experiences" are part of the educational project of an institution, considered to be part of the "identity" or institutional culture. They may have a certain degree of systematic application, continuity and institutional legitimacy which allow them to extend over time. Sometimes, the process can occur spontaneously; other times it may result from deliberate efforts made by teachers who spearhead the initiative despite the difficulties imposed on them by the administration. Still other

projects are achieved thanks to institutional policies promoted by the administrators, despite teachers' resistance.

From institutional community service and volunteering to service-learning: The transition from the "absolute solidarity service" to service-learning is probably the most fundamental one, because it differentiates service-learning from classic youth volunteering activities. It also guarantees that schools engage with the community in a manner intentionally relevant to the school's identity.

To make this transition, educators must identify what can be learned in / from the target community, and which topics of the curricula can be related to the activity carried out.

Sometimes, all it takes is for a teacher to notice the enthusiasm of students involved in a service project and decide to relate it to a lesson, or for a teacher to get involved with a solidarity project and connect themes from their subject to the project's content.

From learning activities (field visits, internships, PBL) to service-learning: The transition from traditional learning to service-learning occurs when the knowledge developed in the classroom is applied or enriched in a real context of solidarity work in service of a social need. This transition makes all the learning achieved or intended to be achieved accessible to the community.

This process requires an examination of the social relevance of this learning: what are the possibilities for enhancing knowledge or applying it to solidarity work in real contexts? Is this knowledge important to the community? Could this acquired knowledge inform a solidarity service that would benefit the target community? (cf. Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2008: 13 and ss).

Excellence in Service-Learning and Promoting Social Change

It is recommended to focus projects on experiences that:

- Go beyond care/aid practices: provide the fish, but also teach how to fish.
- Require analytical thought, diagnosis and collaborative management, listening skills, and empathy as quality criteria
- Establish networks with social organizations and community leaders so that recipients can move from being recipients to being co-protagonists (cf. CLAYSS, 2016a: 26).

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

3.4 Service-Learning Quality Criteria[11]

"Good service-learning projects improve learning quality and also allow for youth leadership and civil engagement. They contribute to the improvement of a community's quality of life, strengthen social networks, and generate a synergy among schools, civil society organizations, and governmental agencies who all aim for the common good" (Tapia, 2006: 25).

Quality of the service is determined according to:
- the duration and frequency of the activity;
- the measurable positive impacts on the community's quality of life;
- the effective satisfaction of recipients;
- the possibility to bring about social change in the middle- and long-term, and not just address one-time urgent needs;
- the development of networks with community organizations, civil society organizations, governmental institutions;
- proposal sustainability (cf. CLAYSS, 2016a: 23).

Learning will be of quality and intentional when:
- service activities allow for the explicit incorporation of disciplinary contents, skills, and values sustained by the educational project of the institution, and
- the solidarity activity and the dialogue opened with the community reinforce previous knowledge and encourage new learning, research, and personal and group growth (cf. CLAYSS, 2016a: 20).

The service-learning project will be enriched and will be even more sustainable if integrated with the initiatives of other institutions that play a role in the community. These might be social organizations, governmental agencies, companies, or any other institution with which agreements, alliances, or networks can be established. Achievements will strengthen social networks, civil engagement, and the common good

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11 See also "Requisitos para la actividad de aprendizaje-servicio de calidad" [Requirements for quality service-learning activities], in Giorgetti, D (2007: 19).

3.5 Itinerary of a Service-Learning Project [12]

The development of a project is like path to travel, an "itinerary," and we have divided it into five major stages. First, there is the emergence of motivation and conceptualization. In this stage, we become aware of a certain reality, noticing problems, emergencies, and challenges, and we imagine and plan what we would like to do to solve them. This is followed by a second stage in which we take action. In the third and final stage, we evaluate what has been done, learn from mistakes, celebrate, and decide whether or not to start over again.

Here is one possible itinerary of a service-learning project.

STAGE 1: MOTIVATION
- Personal and institutional motivation to develop the project.
- Knowledge and understanding of the service-learning concept.
- Awareness of the importance of youth playing a prominent role.

STAGE 2: DIAGNOSIS
- Identification of needs/problems/challenges, working jointly with the recipient community.
- Analysis of the viability of getting a response from the educational institution.

STAGE 3: PROJECT DESIGN AND PLANNING
- Objectives of the solidarity service and the learning.
- Recipients of the solidarity service.
- Activities of the solidarity service.
- Learning contents and activities.
- Tentative schedule and timing.
- Locations for project development.
- People in charge and active participants.
- Resources.
- Reflection and evaluation of the design and overall cohesion of the project.

STAGE 4: IMPLEMENTATION
- Definition of institutional alliances, securing of resources, formalization of agreements and alliances.
- Implementation and management of the solidarity project simultaneous to development of learning contents associated.
- Recording of what has been implemented. Reflection and evaluation of the entire process and the milestones reached.
- Adjustments, revisions, new implementations and alliances.

STAGE 5: CLOSURE AND MULTIPLICATION
- Final evaluation and systematization.
- Celebration and recognition of active participants.
- Continuity and multiplication of service-learning projects.

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12   Based on Tapia (cf. 2006: 185-220)

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

CROSS-CUTTING PROCESSES
- Reflection
- Ongoing record, systematization, and communication
- Evaluation

3.6 Stages and Cross-cutting Processes in the Itinerary of a Service-Learning Project

In the outline on the previous page, these stages are further differentiated:
1 - Motivation
2 - Diagnosis
3 – Design and planning
4 – Project implementation
5 – Closure

This outline may be developed in different ways in each school and can entail more or less complex activities depending on the characteristics of each project. The itinerary we propose aims to suggest and rank some of the most important tasks for a quality service-learning initiative.

While the stages of an itinerary reflect a sequential and progressive logic of the tasks, there are certain aspects of the project that do not take place in a chronological order, but are constant throughout. That is why the itinerary includes three simultaneous processes relevant to the entire project:

- Reflection
- Ongoing record, systematization and communication
- Process evaluation or monitoring.

These are the "cross-cutting processes" of the project, parallel to one another. They are employed throughout the project's entire "lifespan," in all its stages and steps. Additionally, they influence, respond to, and shape one another.

The image below allows us to graphically sum up the outline of the proposed itinerary (cf. CLAYSS, 2016b: 2; Tapia, 2006: 192)


1. MOTIVATION   2. DIAGNOSIS   3. DESIGN AND PLANNING   4. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION   5. CLOSURE

REFLECTION

ONGOING RECORD, SYSTEMATIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

PROCESS EVALUATION OR MONITORING
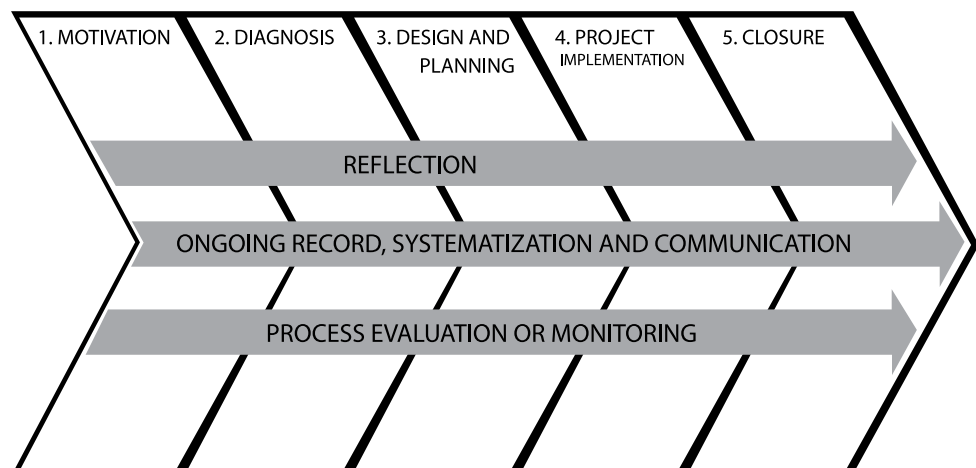
Each project's road is unique, and the steps of those who travel it will vary according to the singular characteristics of each person, group, institution, and need involved. We can be sure, however, that the footsteps will be indelible on the path of individual, collective, and community development.

In the section below, we will analyze each part of a possible itinerary, beginning with cross-cutting processes, and following with the stages and the corresponding steps. Understanding these stages will aid greatly in the design and implementation of high-quality service-learning projects.

Cross-Cutting Processes
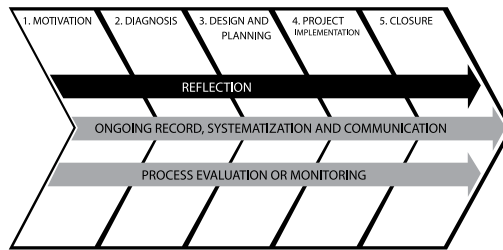
Reflection

Reflection refers to the processes by which the protagonists of the project think critically about their experiences and affirm the purpose of the service (cf. Tapia, 2006: 195 and ss). It is one of the distinctive and core elements of the service-learning approach.

> *"Systematic reflection is what transforms an interesting and committed experience into something that has a significant influence on the learning and development of students" (cf. CLAYSS, 2016c: 5)*

Let us conceive of reflection as an ability that students and teachers can develop during the project. Making space for reflection allows them to connect theory with practice, and formal learning contents with experiences in the field. They are able to step back and reconsider their personal practices in a critical manner, making them better equipped to face relationship and group functioning issues.

Reflection is recommended in the different stages of every good service-learning project:
- The preliminary stage benefits from reflection that raises awareness, examines previous and crucial knowledge, and identifies the need for learning activities prior to the development of the service.
- Implementation benefits from reflection that clarifies situations and resolves conflicts, evaluates feelings, distinguishes problem areas, detects mistakes, thinks of alternatives, and finds new approaches.
- Ongoing record, systematization, and communication: reflection in this stage is necessary for organizing records and accounts of the experience, streamlining ways to communicate, and recognizing intermediate accomplishments, processes, and acquired knowledge.
- Evaluation benefits from reflection that leads to drawing conclusions and identifying useful factors for assessing the achievements, satisfaction and impact of the experience.

Reflection, in educational institutions, allows students and teachers to become aware of what they are learning, express doubts and experiences, strengthen their leadership role, and make suggestions. At the same time, it allows them to discuss adjustments and corrections to the original project.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Reflection can be developed through multiple activities: writing or other types of creative expression, group discussions in class, gatherings, meetings, workshops, or conferences. It can be recorded in logs, work diaries, reports, research papers, devices, blogs, web pages, etc. The variety of reflection activities is as wide as the creativity of each group.

Ongoing Record, Systematization, and Communication

"Experience is not what happens to a person, but what they do with what has happened."

Aldous Huxley
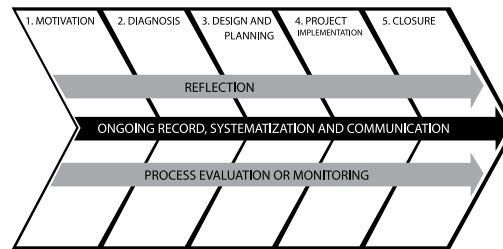
Keeping an **ongoing record** of the project is a critical and often overlooked aspect of a quality service-learning experience. Recording the learning and actions taken throughout the project, as opposed to after the project is completed, is invaluable for reflection processes. Furthermore, many reflection activities are also simultaneously instances of recording the actions taken: work diaries, logs, reports, creative expressions, photographs, compiling anecdotes, recording testimonies, and collecting newspaper clippings, among others.

A project's ongoing record allows us to recover contents and actions that are at stake during the implementation of a project. You should consider the motive and "starting point" of the project, the design, the circumstances of its implementation, the difficulties and accomplishments, the times for reflection and evaluation, the concluding phase, and the "finish line" (final accomplishments, indicators, impact). An ongoing record, therefore, is a key element of the evaluation process, and it is essential for communicating the project. To that end, there are multiple ways to document a project's stages and processes. This can be done in various forms (diary, portfolio, notice board, project folder, blog, web page, etc.) and formats (written, audio-visual, multimedia) (cf. CLAYSS, 2016b; Paso Joven, 2004a). In these ways, and in others, you can encourage the role of young people and develop excellent and creative learning activities.

An ongoing record uses all forms and formats available and convenient to convert key facts or processes of the project into information that can be evaluated and communicated.

Systematization reveals the richness of the project and contributes to the collective construction of learning. It is an important reflection activity to organize with the whole team everything recorded individually and as a group at each stage of the project. This allows us to recover the personal facts and incorporate them into the collective construction.

Establishing a hierarchy and systematizing the information gathered allows us to discover the particular features of the project and also easily distinguish the strengths and aspects that need to be corrected. In this regard, systematization also has elements of an evaluative activity.

The resulting products of this systematization will form the basis of the communication and report of the project within and from the institution to the community (cf. CLAYSS, 2016b; Paso Joven, 2004a)

For the institution, it functions as a stepping-stone to designing new projects or replicating the successful ones. To the community, it publicizes the importance of the action through verifiable data. For the active participants, it measures their work, their commitment, and the efficacy of their actions.

The support and involvement of other participants from the community will be directly related to the clarity of the information provided and the possibility of assessing project impact according to real and measurable data.

Systematization then consists of arranging and prioritizing the recorded information in a strategic way for the purpose of communicating about the project.

Communication is a continuous process among the participants of the project, with the institution, with community partners, and with the community as a whole. A good service-learning project involves creating effective communication channels among the participants of the project and between participants and the community. This serves to spread the information, attract higher participation, raise awareness of problem areas on which the project is developed, and extend activities and accomplishments.

Communication promotes additional learning and allows us to make the invisible visible:
- Specific learning regarding communication processes
- Visibility of the project and the community engagement of youth

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Top 10 Ways to Communicate Service-Learning

(cf. Fiske, 2002 quoted by Tapia, 2006:197-198):

1. Let the students tell the story.

2. Provide appropriate visual material of the projects.

3. Describe what service-learning is in a 30-second sentence and do not use "educational jargon" with parents and community leaders.

4. Match your messages to greater and more significant educational events.

5. Make the project relevant to the interests and concerns of your community.

6. Connect your program with a national initiative.

7. Do your homework: gather evidence of the effectiveness of service-learning.

8. Know the arguments of critics and be prepared to respond to them.

9. Build alliances with educational institutions and civil society organizations that share your interests.

10. Be persistent and patient: changing perceptions takes time.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Sometimes, local newspapers do not respond to usual press releases, but a student who sends a story or a letter to the editor may get the media response desired. Most free publications welcome publishable material and many local radio stations accept short materials for broadcasting, following a contact visit to the studio.[13]

The media visibility of a project is important for recognizing and appreciating the contribution of younger generations, contradicting established prejudices, and motivating other young people to participate.

Monitoring or Process Evaluation
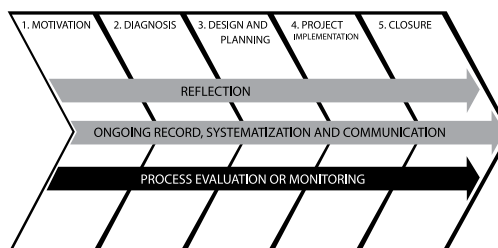
Monitoring or process evaluation is a core aspect of a service-learning project, in which experiences are examined and successes and mistakes analyzed. It provides assessment on whether actions are developing according to plan and goals met. Evaluation is a permanent process, planned from the very beginning.

In service-learning projects, their dual intentionality requires the evaluation both of the goals set for service of the community and the achievement of the educational objectives of the project: the knowledge and competencies acquired and applied.

At the Sixth International Seminar on Education and Solidarity Service, Margarita Poggi stated that in service-learning projects, "...efforts should be made to evaluate the objectives that were originally planned from the design of the project, but there should also be enough openness to be able to meet those concerning the development of the project, many times exceeding its design." ((Argentina. Ministry of Education, 2004: 90).

Therefore; we can say that when proposing the evaluation or monitoring of a service-learning project, the following should be under primary consideration:

- Identifying possible opportunities for evaluation.
- Distinguishing the evaluation of learning and of service.
- Determining methodologies, responsible parties, participants, and their respective roles.
- Designing evaluation tools (registration forms, interviews, self-evaluation questionnaires, etc.).

The process of evaluation or monitoring must:

- Be inclusive and democratic.
- Consider the process as well the results, though these should be quantified.
- Promote self-evaluation of accomplishments and personal changes as a result of practice.

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13   Advice from Salisbury Project, Great Britain, quoted by Tapia (cf. 2006: 198)

- Start with a positive, forward-looking perspective – if an evaluation activity reveals a lack of institutional support, the takeaway is not that the administration doesn't care. Rather, it is necessary to meet with the administration to discuss a specific issue of the project.

Again, these processes of evaluation require cognitive operations closely linked to reflection and vital to ongoing record, systematization, and communication.

3.6.1 Itinerary Stages

Stage 1 - Motivation
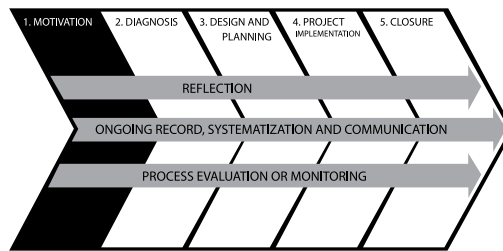
Motivation drives every service-learning project. It is unique to each project, because each school, teacher, and group of students is different and they make each project unique and unrepeatable.

Initial motivation for developing a service-learning project may result from an interest on the part of teachers and administrators in improving relationships at school or academic performance, strengthening values education, and/or providing children and young people with the opportunity to be protagonists in solidarity initiatives, thereby allowing them to actively exercise democratic citizenship and put their knowledge and abilities at the service of the community.

In many cases, motivation may arise from a specific demand presented to the school by an organization in the community, from the concerns of neighbors or school families, or from the concerns of teachers and students regarding issues that challenge them or motivate action.

Initially, motivation is often shared by a small number of people, who may become the natural leaders of the project. For a project to be carried out, motivation must be passed on to every participant possible and, to as great an extent possible, involve the entire school community and the community in general. The stronger the collective motivation, the better the viability, implementation, continuity, and sustainability of the project.

In some cases, it will be clear to everyone why it is necessary to organize the project; in other cases, it will not be as obvious and time and effort must be invested in order to provide sufficient motivation to those involved directly or indirectly in the project.

The motivation stage involves two central aspects:

I. Personal and institutional motivation for developing the project
II. Knowledge and understanding of the concept of service-learning

I.   Personal and institutional motivation for developing the project

As noted above, the reasons for which a service-learning project is started can vary widely. Regardless of whether the initial motivation came from administrators, teachers, students or the community, it is important to:

- make clear why the institution decides to develop a service-learning project, considering its profile,
- encourage the motivation of management teams, teachers and parents,
- analyze and promote the motivation of students,
- consider who will be the developers and leaders of the project,
- analyze how to establish the relationship with the community and its leaders who must be informed or committed to the project.

It is important to plan informative and motivating activities for teachers, students, the school community, and eventually, the larger community. These activities ensure the educational importance of these new participation spaces. The clearer the motivation behind the project, and the more it is shared, the greater the possibility that the project will be collaborative and sustainable.

II.   Knowledge and understanding of the concept of service-learning

An important part of the initial motivation of the project is making sure that all participants understand and are familiar with the service-learning approach and its differences from other social activities and other teaching strategies.

Teacher training is a vital component that will enrich the project planning, intentionally connect the solidarity activity with the educational project, and anticipate and allay the fears and criticism that accompany every innovation.

Student training will encourage students to embrace the project and play a leading role both in community activities and in the learning processes involved.

If parents or families in the school community have in-depth knowledge of the approach that will be carried out, it is possible that they will become partners, collaborators and potential stakeholders in the experience. At the very least, educating them will mitigate opposition and fears, and the experience will progress with minimal setbacks. Families often express fears surrounding field trips, or concern that children will "waste time", based in prejudices and preconceptions that may be addressed through dialogue, through defending the educational importance of the service-learning project, and through the institutional relationships established with the community.

Finally, it is important that community participants have a clear idea of the scope and purpose of the activity, both to avoid false expectations and to allow community participants to take on a role as co-protagonists in the project, transforming the community itself into the educational space.

Stage 2 - Diagnosis
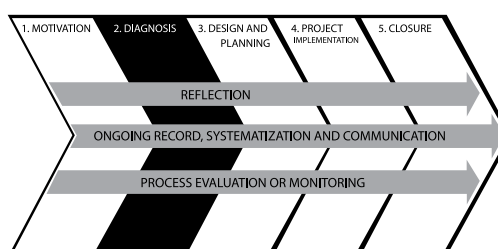
From motivation, we move on to analysis, assessment, and decision-making. The details of these elements will vary depending on each situation and the culture of the institutions involved. This stage marks the commencement of concrete planning. Rather than applying prescribed solutions, this stage should prioritize the learning of every participant, from the decision to do something to the preliminary implementation of a defined project.

Step 1 Participatory Diagnosis

The word "diagnosis" refers to an analytical perception of a given reality, as applied in the development of social projects. This type of diagnosis allows us to have a better understanding of what is going on in a social space, detect problems and relationships, and identify interrelated factors and possible courses of action.

When applied to a service-learning project, a diagnosis aims to identify the real and pressing needs of the community that may be addressed from the educational institution by children and young people. Simultaneously, it seeks the best opportunities to develop significant learning.

Information must be gathered, and representative individuals, community leaders, and groups and institutions that work in the area of interest must be consulted.

A participatory methodology allows us to leverage everyone's knowledge. It is a democratic exercise of citizenship, and also takes into account the opinion of potential recipients/co-protagonists of the project, especially in cases where they serve a community different from the one they inhabit (as in the case of solidarity trips). Activities may include a clarifying institutional session about social problems, research and compilation of academic, journalistic, and Internet material, discussions in different areas of the school community, an open house, interviews, and/or data collection.

Beyond the techniques employed, it is important to ensure the greatest possible participation. This increases not only the precision of the diagnosis, but also the scope of project involvement from the outset.

When the service-learning project is developed outside of the students' community, in an unfamiliar environment, it is crucial that institutional ties and previous contacts are aimed at ensuring an entry into the community. This must be respectful and appropriate according to the context, needs, and feelings of target community. It must also allow for a continuity of actions rather than single or occasional interventions.

Description of the Problem

Some project design manuals use techniques (see Tools) and consider "priority setting" criteria.

To illustrate the point, we will mention a few:
- Listing problems that affect a certain group of people
- Identifying the characteristics of the social situation and the factors that led to them (causes)
- Estimating magnitude, that is to say, the number of people affected by the problem
- Assessing problem severity, with an objective and a subjective component,
- Determining project urgency
- Reporting on or studying the project background (if there are similar actions in the area or a different one, if there were any previous attempts to design an action similar to the one under consideration)

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

- Examining the characteristics of the school community, as well as its strengths and limitations in developing action alternatives
- Considering obstacles and difficulties in taking action
- Taking stock of available resources
- Identifying partners to address the problem, such as other organizations
- Analysis of the response capacity of the educational institution

- **Is the solution the school could provide related to its identity?**

  There are multiple and complex social problems, and the educational institution cannot and should not try to solve all of them. When defining the problem area to be addressed, it is important to prioritize those social needs that may be dealt with through an explicitly educational project, with a high level of participation and learning from students. From there, educators can identify the issues that lie within the scope of action of children and young people.

  Eventually, the school may build relationships with other institutions in the community, such as government offices, social organizations, or companies, which address the problem area from different standpoints. The educational institution may preserve its own place and identity in this network. Thus the responsibilities of the school are clear and there may be mutual participation and agreements to start a collaborative project.

- **The possibility to offer solutions depending on resources, priorities, and available time.**

  The topic to be addressed must balance the interests and motivations of the protagonists of the service with the expectations of the community and the resources available. It is important to consider the extent to which the educational institution can realistically meet these expectations, as well as the relevance of the project from an educational standpoint and the learning opportunities the proposed solidarity action can provide.

  In order to guarantee basic safety conditions and effective learning opportunities, there must be an appropriate balance between the desires of young people and the responsibility of adults involved.

Stage 3: Designing and Planning the Project.
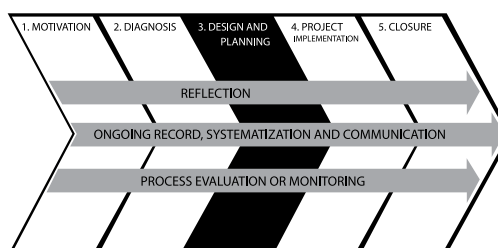
The design of a service-learning project builds upon the proposal in a process that brings together educational and social intent. Many teachers have experience in educational project design, both in terms of institutional educational projects and classroom work planning. The design of a service-learning project incorporates basic educational planning tools and issues concerning the implementation of projects in a non-school environment.

A good design facilitates implementation and offers metrics for evaluating the approach to the situation-problem and the resulting curricular learning. Essential questions that

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

proper planning should answer are[14] :

WHAT do we want to do?	Nature of the project
WHY do we want to do it?	Origin and grounds
WHAT do we want to come of it?	Objectives, purposes, and goals of the project
WHO will do it?	People in charge of the project
WHO is the target?	Recipients or beneficiaries
HOW will we carry it out?	Activities and tasks Methodology Delegation of responsibilities Applied techniques
WHEN will we do it?	Approximate estimated time for each activity, with spaces for cross-cutting processes. Development of a schedule (setting a specific time)
WHAT resources are available?	Viability Human resources Material and financial resources Cost and budget determination
WITH WHOM will we do it?	Possible partnerships with other community members, agencies, and civil society organizations
WHERE will we do it?	Physical location Space available and space affected

Internal Consistency and Design Review

Once the planning has been completed, it is advisable to analyze the internal consistency of the design of the project. This means considering if there is consistency in concepts and activities, according to substantiation, objectives, activities, evaluation, and results.

For the design review of the project, we have included below a list of questions that may serve as a guide for this control (Paso Joven, 2004b:16-17):

- Has the problem been clearly identified and defined?
- Are there sufficient grounds for action?
- Is there an accurate definition of learning objectives?

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14   To learn more, refer to Tapia (cf. 2006: 205-213)

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

- Is there a clear definition of the objectives of the solidarity service with regard to the community problem that has been detected?
- Are planned activities in line with the set objectives?
- Are the recipients identified?
- Are the tasks and responsibilities of each participant well defined?
- Is there a planned schedule within and/or outside school hours for the development of the project?
- Have the spaces used for the development of the activities of the project, both inside and outside the school, been taken into account?
- What are the available resources? Are they sufficient? What is the project's source of funding? Has additional funding been requested from other institutions?
- Do planned activities fall on their scheduled dates?
- Are spaces for reflection and feedback being considered?
- Are different instances for evaluation and methods of evaluation under consideration?
- Is curricular learning explicitly evaluated?
- Are the quality of service and the results being evaluated?
- Do students have a leading role? Do they have it throughout every stage of the project?

Stage 4 - Project Implementation
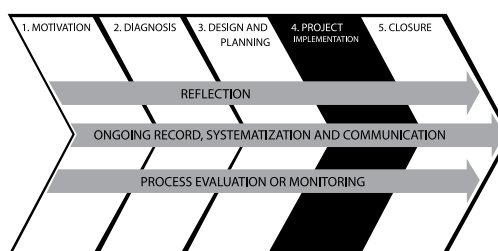
This stage includes the launch of the project, moments for feedback, and potential monitoring mechanisms. Sustained action and reflection will guarantee effective learning.

Partnerships and Resources

I.   Institutional partnerships

Establishing institutional partnerships and obtaining the resources necessary for the project are the first moves of implementation. In some cases, this can be done while planning is still under way. This is key for ensuring project sustainability.

Establishing partnerships allows us to relate more effectively to the recipient community, increases the possibilities of advocacy in the chosen field, and, in many cases, permits access to financial and human resources that would otherwise not be available.

Even one close connection to organizations in the community served or its natural leaders is often one of the keys to the success of the service-learning program.

II. Obtaining resources

The possible financial supports for a service-learning project may vary widely and include the institution's internal resources, State resources, donations from companies, organizations or people, or funds obtained through different activities performed specifically for the project.

The procedures for planning, obtaining, and managing resources can be some of the most valuable learning processes related to the service-learning project.

Every social change initiative requires that costs be calculated, and that necessary resources be identified, sought out, and acquired. Therefore, this step provides students with a valuable exercise in critical competencies for future insertion into the business world and financial self-sufficiency, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Young protagonists can take the lead on identifying and leveraging existing resources at the national, regional, and local levels. These may come from the state, from organizations, or from companies. Another way to generate resources is to organize specific fundraising activities, such as concerts, bake sales, craft fairs, or traditional rural festivals. This is also an important area in which young people can play a leading role and acquire knowledge.

Once funding is obtained, it is important to keep orderly expense and income records. This both preserves project transparency and encourages student learning.

Implementation and Management of the Service-Learning Project

Once the project is launched, all parties involved, from the coordinator and students to the community organizations included in the planning, will form a working network for the implementation of the activities planned.

At this point, the stages and the cross-cutting processes (reflection, evaluation, recording, communication, and systematization) tend to overlap. Adequate monitoring of curricular learning and application of pedagogy will contribute to the plan's ease of development, as will evaluation of operational matters and the service provided.

Writing a schedule and a chart with expected results for each activity will significantly facilitate these assessments.

During the development of the activity, planning should address the delegation of responsibilities such as logistics and record keeping. Spaces for reflection on the work done and the assessment of results should also be identified and reserved during the planning process.

It is likely that unexpected difficulties may arise throughout the project. Students and educators might encounter small and large pitfalls. They may face crises that challenge their motivation and force them to modify and adapt their plan in minor or significant ways.

They may also be delighted by unexpected positive results, discover unknown talents, and form or strengthen personal bonds.

Reflection activities and ongoing dialogue are the map that makes the road.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Stage 5 Closure
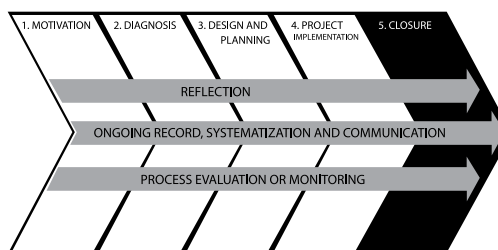
Although the processes of reflection, record keeping, systematization, communication, and evaluation were present in the previous stages of the project, in this stage they are completed. Participants collect diverse systematized materials and from them draw their final conclusions. They analyze achievements, measure impact, and plan the publication or final report of the project, its results, and its eventual multiplication.

Final Evaluation and Systematization

I.   Closure Evaluation

When a service-learning project concludes, a final evaluation tailored specifically to the project should be conducted. The development of the different stages should be assessed. This involves much more than just the sum of the process evaluation periods.

Based on the dual intentionality of service-learning and on the objectives set at the beginning of the project, both the learning results (regarding the knowledge acquired) and the quality of the service provided (regarding the fulfillment of the objectives and impact on the recipient community) are to be evaluated.

As for the protagonists of the service-learning project, it will be important to evaluate the level of participation of the students involved in the project, and the extent to which learning was integrated with the solidarity service. Student self-assessment at the end of the project is key to assessing the project as a whole.

In addition, it is to the advantage of the evaluation process to include feedback from the project's recipients and organization leaders with whom alliances have been made. The perspectives of school administrators, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community should also be taken into consideration.

This handbook offers several quality criteria as guidelines for project evaluation. Based on these criteria, we propose a list of basic aspects to be included in any project evaluation, though project organizers are encouraged to include other criteria if deemed necessary. Educational institutions should apply them in procedural and final stages, as appropriate. It is also necessary to design evaluation tools suitable for each institution and project (interviews, polls, graphics, etc.), and to have a plan for the different stages and corresponding individuals in charge. In this way, the evaluation becomes a meaningful learning opportunity for all participants involved in the experience.

Essential Aspects to be Evaluated in a Service-Learning Project

Service quality:
- Fulfilment of the objectives
- Recipients' satisfaction

Learning quality:
- Fulfilment of the pedagogical objectives
- Quality of the academic contents learnt
- Quality of the competencies, skills, and attitudes developed
- Quality of the group's evaluation, self-assessment, and awareness of social issues related to the project

Impact of the service-learning project
- Expected impact
- Possible unexpected impact
- Personal impact of the project on each student (self-esteem and confidence in the student's own abilities, and also recognition of those abilities)
- Personal and professional impact of the project on the teachers involved
- Community impact (relationships, installed capacity, etc.)

Institutional impact of the project
- Academic performance of the students involved
- Academic performance of the institution
- Enrolment
- Student inclusion and retention
- Reinsertion
- Family involvement
- Community recognition

II. Final Systematization

All reflections, evaluations and records collected throughout the project converge at the end of the project in the stage of closure and systematization.

For the final systematization it is advisable to:
- Prepare a brief summary of the experience: identify the main characteristics and some core ideas to guide your writing, without being caught up in non-relevant facts.
- Collect not only well-accomplished activities or those with positive impact, but also failed experiences, in order to demonstrate ability to learn from our mistakes or follow alternative courses of action. Uncertainties left after the project should also be recorded.

All participants should be included in the systematization: school administrators, teachers, students, target community, and organizations involved.

The final product is the finished testimony of the project: a report, a folder, a CD, a short video, a banner, a publication, a radio or television show, a blog, or a web site, among other possibilities.

The systematization or closing brief is of great significance because no matter how positive the experience may have been for its participants, if no thorough records remain, it will be difficult to receive recognition for it, to have this recognition impact the institution, and for the project to gain continuity or be replicated by others.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

To gain the support and involvement of other community members, it is necessary to accurately communicate why we are working, what accomplishments have been achieved, and how they could collaborate with us.

If connections have been established with other institutions, such as social organizations, businesses, private donors, or official agencies, it would be useful to provide them with copies of the final evaluation and/or systematization and, if applicable, express gratitude for their support. If their involvement included financial support, an expense detail should be submitted as well.

Celebration and Recognition of Protagonists

In the service-learning pedagogy, celebration is a time to relive and share our experiences. It is an opportunity for reflection in which the attitude of solidarity service is consolidated and our commitment to it is affirmed.

Recognition and celebration strengthen individual and group self-esteem, and increase recognition of the accomplishments as a whole. Celebration offers well-deserved acknowledgement from the community of the service provided by the young people. It helps to break down stereotypes and prejudices and shed a light on the commitment and actions of children and young people.

Usually, celebrations are open to a vast circle of people and are the setting in which certificates, diplomas, medals or any other means of formal acknowledgement are granted. Aside from the particulars of each ceremony or festivity, in any celebration there are three mandatory stages:

- Atmosphere setting: when the community gathers, the host calls for a moment of joy and silence to listen and to connect.
- Content sharing: reading an appropriate text, listening to a poem or song, making a symbolic gesture, listening to the participants' testimony, etc.
- Commitment making: where we affirm the necessity of embracing our values and sharing our experiences in an ongoing manner. This is also the time to express gratitude and distribute diplomas or objects of recognition.

As an increasing number of universities and businesses worldwide favor applicants with volunteer experience, the importance of issuing certificates of participation should not be underestimated.

Continuity and Project Multiplication

If the protagonists are satisfied with their actions and have noticed significant impact on the community, they will assess the feasibility of continuing in the project or consider launching a different service-learning project.

Some projects have clear and concrete termination dates (for instance, installing traffic lights). In these cases, new work objectives should be determined. Others are long-term projects (a ten thousand tree path), where at each stage the feasibility of the next stage should be established and adjustments made accordingly. In institutions with their own Institutional Educational Solidarity Projects, projects tend to multiply within the institution.

This multiplication of projects within the institution occurs in two ways:
• Branching projects (one subject, several projects): sometimes, the project begins with a main subject and then it branches off into other related subjects.

- Multiple projects (several subjects, several projects) some institutions simultaneously develop several experiences, each with a different subject matter. A project's success encourages other teachers to develop other projects relating to a different subject course.

This multiplication is also observed outside of the institution, whether through the creation of networks with other educational institutions to conduct the same project, or through the transmission of knowledge and technical support to other schools in order for them to develop new service-learning experiences.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

3.7 Tools

To develop a service-learning project, we must implement various strategies and tools at different stages of the experience. Many of the tools for diagnosis and planning can also be adapted for later use in the processes of recording, systematization, and communication.

With the increasing usability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), young people – digital natives – have embraced new resources for communicating, navigating social networks, producing and publishing multimedia content, and generally incorporating virtual reality into their daily life. Our intention is to incorporate these same tools to boost the development of our projects.

> *"I am excited, because I feel there is considerable potential for students to take control of the "means of production" – to use this technology to communicate, to become creative producers of media, and to represent their perspectives and concerns. I also believe that it is vital for schools to address cultural experiences that young people have outside the classroom, and many of these experiences are now intimately connected with digital media".*
> *(David Buckingham, 2008)*

We have organized the following toolkit considering the cross-cutting processes and the different stages of the **ITINERARY**. Some of them may be applied with the basic technology of pen and paper, while others will require the use of computers with Internet access. All of them may be recreated and adjusted according to the particulars of the project to be developed and its institutional and community context.

If you are not familiar with the use of information technology tools, at the end of this section you will find an appendix describing some free tools available on the Internet.

Logbook of the experience[15]

OBJETIVE: To raise awareness of the problems around you.

The purpose of the activity is to register details of daily life, so that possibilities for eventual solutions can be identified. Reflection can be in written or oral form, or through listening to or reading descriptions of other service experiences. Learning emerges from the combination of theory and practice, consolidated by reflection (where the actual scope of the actions is understood), observation, and interaction among the parties. It allows students to learn from each other.

(Multiple intelligences)

INSTRUCTIONS

What should we write in the experience logbook?
- The logbook should include not only a record of tasks, events, dates and times, but also descriptions, anecdotes, data, and steps taken.
- Logbooks should be albums of imagery, sounds, colors, smells, worries, introspections, doubts, fears, and critical questions about certain subjects and people, but most importantly, it should be about you.
- The key ingredient to a successful logbook is honesty. Don't hold back while writing. Grammar and spelling should be reviewed for the final version.
- The record can be made in different ways: producing minutes of the meetings, presentations, instructions, taking photos of the participants engaging in the service, of the community in action, making a "before and after" record of events, filming or audio recording, so that no information is lost and it can be later transcribed into a written document of the experience.
- Write something before and after each activity. If you can't write everything in one sitting, try to jot down random thoughts, describe pictures, etc, then go back in a day or two and recreate a more complete and colorful verbal image.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Many images, multimedia recordings, and files are gathered throughout the experience. It is key to properly organize these resources so as to have them available in other stages and processes, specifically for the recording, systematization, and communication stages. We recommend that you create a computer folder / drive for the experience, organizing resources in different folders, grouped by date and type of activity. For example, if you take a field trip to measure the pollution in a stream, you could create a folder named "stream_April2017" to store all the pictures and multimedia records, along with a brief summary of the actions taken.

IMPORTANT: Remember to periodically make a backup copy of all information, recording it to a USB or DVD and filing it at the school library.

Blogs[16] are an option for recording the day-to-day experience on the Internet, promoting active involvement of the students, who will be able to view all comments and input from visitors to the website. Along with a summary and reflection of what has been

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15 Based on: PaSo Joven (2004b)

16 See Tools 2.0 - Blogs

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

experienced and learned, several multimedia resources, such as presentations, photo albums, audios, videos, and interactive maps can also be included. It is a good strategy to put together a "production team" in charge of posting, organizing, and updating the information.

The first step of content production for a blog or web site is to define its objectives and audience. The next step is to determine the content and think about the feasibility of producing such content.

The next stages for content production are:

- Collecting and selecting the information to be included. Remember that here you can include texts, photographs, videos, audios, and a great variety of multimedia productions.
- Organizing the contents: define the subjects, categories, and the format of the messages to be published.
- Create the home page with tags and related links. Do not forget to add a link to your school's site (if it has one). You may add new links as you move forward with the project.
- Customize the space: choose a design and graphic style that is consistent with the project theme, group identity, and educational institution. If the project has a logo or if the school has a coat of arms, including the image will help customize the space.
- Product evaluation: do not forget to check that all links are working, that the structure is clear and the navigation is simple. You may ask different people to navigate the blog and give feedback. From there you can make the necessary adjustments.

IMPORTANT: Be aware that ALL posts of a blog become available on the Internet to anyone who accesses that space. You should, therefore, be extremely careful not to publish personal information of students that may jeopardize their safety. Do not publish any pictures of minors without first receiving permission to do so from their parents. Teachers may wish to request this permission at the beginning of the year, in order to freely publish the experience-related activities.

Eyes that See Beyond

OBJECTIVE: To raise awareness of the problems around you.

The purpose of the activity is to record details of daily life to identify possibilities for eventual solutions.

INSTRUCTIONS

Individual

1- Draw your route from home to school.

2- For one week, observe situations, realities, or facts that relate to a particular problem and write them down. For example:

MONDAY "Litter on the streets, plaza needs repair. It rained and streets and pavement are flooded,"
TUESDAY "People do not respect traffic signs, they drive at high speeds."
WEDNESDAY "Kids on the street and train stations hustling or panhandling."
THURSDAY................
FRIDAY...................

Group

These observations are consolidated and systematized, allowing us to identify the most visible and frequently noted problems. Then, choose the problem that is most inspiring as a service-learning initiative.

For example:

- Promote what is lacking...
- Take care of something that is deteriorating....
- Improve the landscape...
- Tackle the causes of something we dislike...
- Identify an issue that may be addressed...

This is a personal exercise in noticing with "eyes that see beyond," and a group awakening to a call for service.

This activity can incorporate teacher participation as well. Teachers are encouraged to consider ways in which the particular subject they teach can connect to the observations.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

On a digital map , locate the spots where the main problems were observed. Use key words (litter - traffic - kids) to identify each spot.

Analyze the location of these spots on the map:

- Are they grouped in a specific area?
- What other locations can we identify on the map that are related to these problems?

For example: the train station, a stream, or a vacant land.

Include the map of the neighborhood in the project's blog, and record any comments on the problems you have detected and your proposals for action.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Who's Who?

OBJECTIVE: To identify possible partners, get to know the setting, and notice patterns.

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the following questions individually:

1) What institutions can be found in the neighborhood? Note their names and learn about their objectives and missions. They might be development organizations, neighborhood or community associations, cooperatives, foundations, hospitals, health clinics, services for people with disabilities, nursing homes, tutoring centers, or others.

2) Do they accept volunteers? If so, for which activities?

3) Would you like to get involved with any of these institutions? Why?

4) What issues would you like to address? Safety, health, recreation and sports, event planning, environmental issues, art and culture, or something else? Why?

5) What are the closest local media outlets (newspapers/radios/TV channel)? Find out who to contact with a press release, article, or any type of information.

As a group:

1) Discuss and systematize individual responses.

2) Draw conclusions with the project coordinator:

What are the areas of common interest of the group? Which organizations would support you in volunteering and engaging actively with the community's needs? Which organizations could benefit from your help?

Write a letter to the editor encouraging others to participate. Include the service opportunities you have noticed and send it to your local newspapers.

Conclusion

Contact the organizations you have identified and communicate your interest in collaborating with them on a community project. Inquire about their needs and how you might be of help to them. Be sure to include information about yourselves and how they can contact you.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

On the same digital map[17] you created in the previous activity, locate your "partners." Add the name, address, and contact details of each organization. This will make their contact information easily accessible. If the organizations have websites, you could include the links on the map or add them to the list of related sites in the project's blog, along with the local media identified in the activity.

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17 See Tools 2.0 - Mapping applications: Google Maps.

Keep Parents in the Loop

OBJECTIVE: To educate parents about the institutional objectives and highlight the possibilities that the service-learning projects offer for their children's education.

DESCRIPTION

A- Preparation for the meeting:

Make an overview of what service-learning entails. The individuals in charge of this activity can be the teachers or students themselves. In preparation, we suggest that you read the material and review the main arguments in favor of the development of service-learning projects.

1.-Students should write a letter to their parents detailing:

a) What the project of the institution is about, the needs it addresses, the service actions to be carried out, the content to be learned, etc.

b) Students' role in the project.

c) If this is not the institution's first year with the project, comment on prior experiences, the project's impact on the community, lessons learned, etc.

The most compelling letter will be chosen by vote to be read at the meeting.

2.- Students should create a survey for their parents on how they would like to be involved with the project: tutoring, leading workshops about their area of expertise, counseling – legal, health, etc. – artistic expression, handcrafts, helping to obtain resources, managing donations, etc.

3.- Students should create an informative brochure containing:

a) A summary of the institution's project

b) Actions to be carried out by each course, group or student.

c) Key dates for events or tasks.

d) A schedule detailing times when tutors or coordinators are available for consultation on any difficulties that may arise regarding the project.

B.- Students should prepare the invitation for the meeting:

Write the invitation.

C.- Meeting

School administrators welcome parents, and students or teachers present the summary they have prepared. Then, the coordinator of the service-learning project (teacher) explains the pedagogical and service objectives of the project. They should highlight the necessity and value of the school's community engagement, offering solutions with their pedagogical project. The chosen letter should be read and each child should hand a copy of the letter (or his/her own letter) to the parents, along with the informative brochure. Finally, parents receive the survey and commit to completing and returning it promptly.

Once you get all the surveys back, take down parents' personal information, interests, and willingness to help in an alphabetical card index box organized by categories. This will let you know who to contact according to the situation.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

DIAGNOSE

It is also important to post a bulletin board in a visible space in the institution, with updates on the community's project. You might include a schedule or movable arrows to indicate which phase of the project you are in. The bulletin board might include anecdotes, stories, photographs, or anything else you consider necessary to inform or display to keep everyone engaged.

After a meeting...

This is a survey distributed at a service-learning information session at a secondary school in Berisso, Buenos Aires, concerning a project of cultural preservation in that area. Teachers, administrators, members of the target community, and leaders of local organizations were all present. The objective of the meeting was to present the project and the proposal of service-learning to this group of interested adults, and to have students share their experiences in the project.

- What is your opinion on student leadership?
- Do you think service-learning as community service is truly a rewarding experience? Why?
- What type of cultural, civic, and social resources does the cultural preservation project provide? (You may replace it with a similar one according to the project.)
- Can you provide some input or constructive criticism on the task the school is carrying out?

This survey provides an opportunity to reflect on, evaluate, and record the project. It is also an opportunity for students to take on a leadership role, as they can be responsible for compiling the responses and reporting on them to the school and community.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Discuss how to carry out the activities proposed employing different technologies, such as:

1. office tools (word processor and slides editor) for the letter and brochures,
2. spreadsheets to tabulate the data obtained in the survey,
3. a blog as a bulletin board of the project with a calendar to remember key dates.

Remember that all these resources should be used to facilitate the activities promoting active learning. Therefore, you should assess the availability of the resources and the time needed for each task.

The activities can be conducted individually or in groups, with each student assigned different responsibilities within the working group.

DIAGNOSIS DISCUSSION

SCORING OF PROBLEMS ACCORDING TO G.U.T. (Gravity, Urgency, Tendency)

At a meeting, hold a discussion on "Eyes that See Beyond" and "Who's Who?" to determine the basic necessities of the community and establish priorities. It is important that participants reach a consensus so as to achieve higher engagement levels.

To make the task easier, write down the ideas in these charts (displayed prominently for everyone to see), for example:

Score	Gravity	Urgency	Tendency
10	Extremely serious	Immediate	Issue will spiral out of control
8	Very serious	High	Issue is very hard to cope with
6	Serious	Moderate	Issue will worsen
3	Not very serious	Low	Issue may worsen
1	Not serious	None	Issue will not worsen or may improve

WORK AREAS	Problematic Issues	Action Priority (apply G.U.T)
Health		
Education		
Production		
Development		
Housing		
Culture		
Communication		
Safety		
Others		

Finally, draft the meeting's minutes. You may present the main conclusions using design and communication techniques, with the collaboration and coordination of teachers in that field of study. Then, display them on the institution's bulletin board during every stage of the project.

The diagnosis discussion may be open to the community. Sheets like the following example will be distributed to all of the classes and their families. Systematize the results applying concepts from math, informatics, and G.U.T. A collective decision will guarantee the commitment of the majority of the educational institution. Add the results to the previous table.

First and Last Name: ...
Address...

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

In your opinion, what are the main challenges that our community (neighborhood, city, town) faces?

PUBLIC SERVICES (water, electricity, gas, pavement)	
Health	
Quality of life	
Economic situation	
Environment	
Culture	
Communication	
Education	
Others	

To your understanding, what is/are the most urgent issue/s ?

Can you think of any solutions to that/those particular issue/s?

Which one do you think the school and its students might best address? Why?

Do you know of any relevant institutions or organizations in the community? Please list them.

What activities do these organizations carry out?

Would you like to be involved in any of those activities? Why?

Would you be willing to support the activities involving the school? If so, in what way/s?

Research:

Once the social challenge to address has been selected, it's time for research. Go out into the community, walk around, observe, and ask questions. The aim is to collect all possible information on the matter. There are many techniques for data collection:

Interview

An interview is a private conversation that is later made public. There are two types of interviews: formal/structured, and informal/unstructured.

Formal interviews are conducted with a list of predetermined questions. The order and phrasing of the questions should be respected. Answers are noted down verbatim in the same questionnaire.

The informal interview gives the interviewee and the interviewer more freedom. There are open questions, leaving more space for conversation. The interviewee may elaborate on their responses.

In both cases, the questionnaire is carefully formulated:
- Questions should be clear and specific.
- Questions should not be leading.
- The interviewer should also take care to:
  - avoid an impression of interrogation
  - provide the interviewee with sufficient time to think over responses
  - allow the interviewee to complete responses
  - ask all of the questions, even if the interviewee has addressed the topic in responses to other questions
  - make brief comments to facilitate flow of conversation
  - thank the interviewee at the end of the interview.

Suggestion: Take down the answers during the interview. If answers are written down after the interview has been completed, some key data relevant for the research might be forgotten. If possible, it might be helpful to record an audio of the interview, in addition to the written notes.

Documentary evidence collection

Local newspapers, community bulletins, magazines, articles, flyers, graffiti, screenshots of social media and biographical material all reflect community issues.

Key informant

A key representative is someone who is well acquainted with the social and political organization, family structure, and beliefs of the target neighborhood or community, and holds an administrative function there. They might work in an organization or simply be a community member actively involved in community issues. Key representatives could be business people, professionals, leaders, directors, housewives, heads of household, teachers, etc. The informant will be asked:

- How does the problem affect the rest of the community?
- What is your personal take on the problem?
- Where can we get more information on the problem?
- What other problems do you consider urgent and/or relevant to address?

We suggest making an audio recording of the interview, but if the individual is not comfortable with that, please take down notes. Here is a sample outline of an interview:

INTERVIEW

Date: ....

Interviewer/s: ....

Interviewee:

Interviewee's role in the community (business person, student, retired, member of a community organization, professional, employee, researcher, others):

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Interviewers inform interviewee of the issue under examination and the project under consideration and then ask the following questions:

- What do you know about this problem? How important is it?
- What does the problem consist of exactly?
- In your opinion, what are the causes of the problem? What factors influence it?
- Who is responsible for solving this problem? Are there any governmental policies in place to address it?
- Who do you think is responsible for the problem? Could it be avoided? How?

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Online newspapers are an inexhaustible source of updated information. Take this into account when collecting documentary information. If you identify any media that frequently publishes information on topics of your interest, you could add them to the list of Recommended Sites.

If you take photos during the interview, you might add them to the final write-up.

You can also record audio and video files of the testimonies obtained during the interviews. You may select some excerpts and include them on the project's blog in order to spread the news about the problem from the point of view of those involved.

All these resources could then be incorporated into presentations to relevant authorities, stakeholders, or possible collaborators.

MATRIX TO ORGANIZE IDEAS FOR ACTION

OBJECTIVES:

a) To think over essential planning items.

b) To sort out various actions to pursue

c) To identify the resources required.

d) To plan the development of actions over time.

The following matrix could be used in project planning. To use it with a group of students, lay ten sheets of poster paper on the floor or hang them on the wall (one per row of the matrix), with the title and corresponding question written. Provide students with markers and invite them to walk around the posters and complete each poster with anything they might consider appropriate for the project (they should already know the subject matter of the problem). This produces both a project design – developed by the young participants – and an already systematized register of the activities. Devote the tenth poster to creative expression – encourage students to write or draw about their expectations, or design a logo for the project. This integrates a reflection activity into the project planning stage. Additionally, the activity can be communicated by exhibiting the posters at school.

A variation of this activity, considering new information and communication technologies, might consist of creating an online forum based on the items of the matrix, where, as with the posters, young participants contribute to the collective creation of the design.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

Substantiation	Why is it necessary to carry out the project?	In the neighborhood, children are dropping out of school because they're not scoring well on exams.
Objectives	What is our goal? What are the objectives of the project?	To provide academic support to children between the ages 6 to 12.
Recipients	Who are the project activities addressed to?	Children between 6 and 12 years old from vulnerable areas.
Participant organizations and/or individuals	Who will take part in the project? Which organizations will work with us?	School No. 8 Community Centre "Together We Can" Youth Association "We R the know-it-all" Health Care Centre No. 10
Activities	What do we have to do to meet the objectives?	Find out where to provide academic support. Hang up posters promoting the service. Enroll interested children. Interview school teachers, etc.
Responsible people	Who are the people in charge?	1. Youth Association (Ana and Pablo) 2. Health Care Centre (social worker) School (teachers and secretary) 3. Community Centre (volunteers and secretary) 4. Olivia and Benjamin
Activity schedule	When will the designed actions take place?	Include schedule.
Results and indicators	What results do you want to achieve with the activities? How can we identify the results proposed?	Number of children taking part in classes. Improvement in school performance (comparison of grades from past and present exams)
Budget	What do we need to carry out the proposed activities? How much money is required to implement the project?	Sheets of paper, pencils, cardboards, Textbooks, various materials, etc.

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HOW TO PREPARE A BUDGET[18]

The budget should be drawn up based on the objectives. This will allow us to have a clear image of what resources we need and the costs they entail.

OBJETIVES

- To anticipate precise needs.
- To learn about available resources.
- To inform third parties how resources will be used.
- To estimate costs accurately in order to control expenses.
- To sort resources by area, in order to identify any excess.
- To differentiate between necessary and secondary expenses.
- To determine fixed, variable or unexpected expenses.
- To compare prices among suppliers so as to choose the most practical.
- To operate with complete transparency.

DEVELOPMENT

What should be purchased?
How much money does each of the necessary goods cost?
In what stage of the project is the expense necessary?

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Consult computer and/or math teachers about the use of spreadsheets that will facilitate the formulation, estimation, and presentation of budgets.

TRACKING SHEET

Sample tracking sheet for project activities

Teachers in charge of project	
Students	
Group 1	
Group 2	
Group n	
Place where activity is carried out	
Address	
Time	
Duration of the activity	

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18 Adapted from Argentina. Secretariat of Social Development. Presidency of the Nation (1999)

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Part 3

COMMUNICATION MAP[19]

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess participation and communication
- To encourage communication within the group

DEVELOPMENT:

The coordinator will propose any topic for discussion. For example, funds for a nursing home, attitudes towards a specific problem, etc. Students will sit down in a circle. Once the discussion is over, the following questions will be made:

- Did all group members take part in the discussion?
- Did they all talk to the group, or just with the coordinator?
- Who talked more? Who less?
- What prevented the silent ones from participating?
- Did they listen to one another?
- Did anyone change his/her opinion after the group discussion?

In groups of four, participants will draw a map in which they mark the location of the different members of the group during the discussion, as well as the communication channels between them. (We suggest drawing the heads of each participant, with arrows indicating the flow of communication.)

- When analyzing the map, consider the following:
- How did the conversation develop?
- Was there a web of communication, or did everyone direct their comments to the same point?
- Was everyone's participation encouraged?
- Is this the way communication always develops within this group? Why?
- Can anything be done to improve communication?

STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS AND ACKNOWLEDGE CONFLICTS

In order to work well in a service project, it is important that all participants consider the interpersonal or inter-institutional relationships established.

Some activities might trigger loaded emotional responses among participants. This should be addressed with care and sensitivity. It is common for conflicts to arise within any relationship, but if they are properly considered and discussed, the resolution of these conflicts can strengthen interpersonal and inter-institutional bonds. However, conflicts are often dismissed or downplayed by and for the parties involved.

Our approach aims to enable the acknowledgement of conflicts. It is essential, therefore, that project coordinators and participants receive the training and support necessary to effectively implement this technique.

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19   Adapted from Minzi, V. (2004)

ALL FOR A TOWER

OBJETIVES: Students will grasp the benefits of working together.

DESCRIPTION

We suggest doing this exercise at the beginning of the service-learning project, to stimulate group cohesion and project planning. It could also be used for the final assessment.

Materials required per subgroup:

2 plates and 5 cups (could be disposable)

1 ribbon roll

2 sets of playing cards

1 large sheet of paper (could be poster paper or newspaper)

2 long chopsticks

5 medium-length chopsticks

Copies of the game instructions for each group

A list of tasks written on the board and/or on a sheet of paper:

1. Designate a discussion/planning commission or committee.

2. Build a sculpture: a tall, strong and beautiful tower.

3. Name the tower, and decide where in the community it will be built.

5. Form a presentation committee.

Stages of the process

6. Building

7. Examination of sculptures

7. Voting

8. Reflection

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Present the activities and work on the list of tasks written on the board. Older students may appoint one member of the group as time keeper.

2. Separate the class into subgroups of 3 to 6 members. These will be the "Building Commissions."

3. Each commission or committee builds its own sculpture according to the following instructions:

- Build a tall, strong, and beautiful tower, as tall as possible, and strong enough to stay in place if you blow on it.
- Time limit: 10 minutes.
- Do not use the ribbon as a part of the tower. Do not support the tower with a wall, chair, table, or anything other than the materials provided.

FINAL COMMENT: Remember this is a group effort; you should all agree on how to build the tower, and keep trying if you mess up at first. If it falls, start over again.

4. When time is up, ask them to name their sculptures.

5. Each commission prepares a presentation to convince the rest of the large group of the durability, stability and creativity of their tower. They present to the group one by one.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Part 3

6. Once all presentations are over, ask participants to vote on the best-quality tower.

Prior to the vote, have them discuss the following questions:

- Do you think your commission has accomplished its objective and achieved good results?
- Do you think some commissions have achieved better results than others?
- What went well in the entire process?
- What made some commissions more successful than others?
- What differences could there be if the activity was done again?

POSSIBLE MODIFICATION:

Ask the students to complete the task building bridges or connections between the different towers with the materials left over.

Most likely they will have to readjust their towers in order to connect them.

7. After a while, the coordinator or host encourages the groups to discuss questions amongst themselves and share their experience in the process.

Suggested questions:

- How did your group work as a team?
- When did cooperation begin and how was it?
- What can we learn from this exercise for our service-learning project?
- What does it contribute to the experience of building bridges with other institutions?
- Was it easy? Why?

The coordinator/teacher will encourage group debate and prompt the students/young participants with the following questions:

- What did you learn from this exercise about cooperation, camaraderie, and teamwork?
- How can this exercise help us organize a valuable community service project?
- What connections do you see between your attitude while building the tower and your attitude when you started organizing the service-learning project?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES FOR THE REFLECTION PROCESS

Group writing or debate:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- How might what you learned help you carry out a successful service-learning project?
- What role would you play in the presentation of the project to other community partners?
- What strengths can you spot in the other teams?

PROPOSAL FOR A REFLECTION ACTIVITY

The following questions were proposed by a teacher in charge of a service-learning project at a technical secondary school in the city of Buenos Aires. Some of the students in the group were new to the project, while others had participated the previous year.

1) What do you know about the project?
2) What expectations do you have about the project?
3) If you have already taken part in the project, do you think it was helpful for learning?

CLAYSS. Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario.

4) What would you remove or add? How could you improve it?

5) What do you think we are doing well, and what should we keep doing?

6) How should it be disseminated?

7) How did you feel during the different stages of the project?

8) What do you think about the continuation of this or other projects?

This activity allowed new protagonists of the project to consider their expectations, and more experienced participants to reflect while assessing their involvement. Questions like these, or others adapted to each institution's project, could be answered with individual written responses or through a group discussion. Depending on the approach selected, the record of this reflection could be written, visual, or auditory. Then, the outcomes could be systematized and communicated depending on the identity of each educational institution.

One of the goals of solidarity service-learning is for participants to deepen their capacity to look beyond personal gratification and devote their effort and commitment to the success of everyone.

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Appendix

Appendix: TOOLS 2.0

The Internet is a valuable resource that, through different sites and programs, allows us to:

- Store large volumes of information in remote servers, allowing us to access our information immediately and at any time from any point connected to the web.
- Communicate with individuals and institutions via e-mail, instant messaging, online forums, videoconferences, etc.
- Work and learn cooperatively.
- Produce content and publish it on the web.
- Participate in virtual communities.

The Internet is not merely a tool; it is a multi-dimensional public space. We see it as a collaborative environment, where ideas can be exchanged, and concepts co-constructed and reinterpreted. Some use this space for work, others for recreation, but all who access the web are able to use it to communicate and exchange information. We encourage you to use this to your advantage when designing and implementing service-learning projects.

The term Web 2.0 was coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2004 to refer to a second generation in the history of community-based web characterized by the emergence of services such as social networks, blogs, wikis and folksonomy that foster collaboration and agile exchange of information between users.

> (…). In general, when we use the term Web 2.0, we refer to a series of applications and web pages that use collective intelligence to provide online interactive services, giving the user control over their own data.
>
> Thus, we can understand Web 2.0 to mean "any and all internet features and services supported by a database that can be changed by users, either in terms of content (adding, changing or deleting information, or linking data to the existing information), format, or both simultaneously". (Ribes, 2007) [20].
>
> o Access from anywhere. The entire management and publication of blogs happens online, so it is not necessary to link the work to a specific computer. This allows the activity to extend beyond the physical limits of the classroom, and to be developed from other places, such as homes or libraries. This grants a large advantage to both teachers and students, as they can manage their working time on the blog regardless of the class time allotted to the project.

Below, we describe the features and the possibilities offered by some Web 2.0 tools, so that you can access them and include them in your projects.

Blogs

Blogs are websites where you can easily publish posts (news or thoughts about a project), which are displayed in chronological order.

These posts can be written by an individual or by a team responsible for keeping the information updated.

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20   See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0

Students become the learning protagonists. When students develop a blog, the traditional learning model is reversed, as they assume leadership of their learning. Blogs also allow for shared authorship. This option allows a group of students to publish and maintain one single blog regarding a topic of common interest. Different roles can be taken on, similar to the editorial team of a professional publication (Palomo et al., 2005).

Blogs can include images, photo albums, multimedia presentations, audios, or videos that help create a complete picture of the experiences.

This can be viewed as an innovation on the long-standing pedagogical goal of facilitating the transmission of knowledge using the highest possible number of senses. Providing opportunities for varied kinds of learning strengthens communication capacity and increases the chance of retaining knowledge.

An important feature of the blogs is that visitors can write comments below any post. This promotes the exchange of ideas and opinions between readers and editors.

Furthermore, blogs often include a list of recommended websites or related blogs on their homepage, which generates new channels of information to broaden the topics presented. These topics are usually represented through key categories or words.

Content categorization. The classification of content in different categories helps organize the resource material provided and facilitate access to it. Additionally, when content is developed by students, they are required to apply selection and classification techniques in the publishing of their own online discourse.

Tools for creating Blogs:
→ **BLOGGER - https://www.blogger.com/start**
→ **WORDPRESS -https://wordpress.org/**

Wikis

Wikis are websites that enable users to add, delete, or edit content quickly and easily, allowing joint production of information in collaborative work groups.

Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) is the clearest example of shared contents of collaborative publication on the web reaching a volume of information and content update impossible to achieve by an individual or a small group of editors.

For the production of Wikis, different access permits can be granted (such as general administrators, editors, writers, or just readers), with the option of creating private wikis, with restricted or public access. When planning activities, teachers may propose an online collective construction to their students, and use wikis to monitor them, modifying the controls to whatever extent they deem necessary.

Like blogs, wikis can have images, links, presentations, videos or audios, and the information can be easily updated.

Tools for creating Wikis:
→ **MEDIAWIKI - http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki**
→ **WIKISPACES - http://www.wikispaces.com**
→ **PBWIKI - http://pbworks.com/academic.wiki**

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

Appendix

Photo Album

Online photo albums allow for the storage and sharing of photos through a program that finds, edits, and publishes the images we save to our computer.

When publishing photos, we can decide how to organize them (either by date or theme), add titles and comments, make presentations, and choose with whom we want to share or exchange them.

The geographical location can also be determined, and images can be linked to points on a Google map.

→ **PICASA – http://picasa.google.com**
→ **FLICKR - http://www.flickr.com/**

Online videos

Nowadays it is very simple to make videos, either with professional cameras or cell phone cameras. It is also easy to share videos on the Internet so that any person can watch them and comment on them.

Videos uploaded to sites such as YouTube can be shared to other websites or blogs by copying the HTML code. This way, any information published can be distributed, reproduced, or interspersed with other video content.

→ **YOUTUBE - http://www.youtube.com/**

On this site, many examples of educational productions can be found, including student-made videos, which are not always well thought-out or skilfully produced. This variety allows to students to compare and think critically about different video productions, and form a clearer idea of the kind of video they might like to produce.

Audio files

Podcast technology enables the creation of audio files (testimonies, songs, ambient sounds, etc.) and their storage for dissemination in web pages and blogs, either as RSS files or through html codes.

Users can download them to computers or MP3 players and listen to them at any time.

This technology is often used in school radios.

→ **ODEO - http://www.odeo.com/**
→ **GOEAR - http://www.goear.com/**

Documents

Any type of file format (PDF, Word, Power Point, among others) can be shared among groups of students, teachers, or specialists to be disseminated through the Internet and/or incorporated on to web pages or blogs, using:

→ **SCRIBD - http://www.scribd.com/**

Text files, spreadsheets, and presentations created throughout the project can also be stored online and accessed from any browser. These files can be edited and shared online, with other users permitted to see them and make changes jointly and simultaneously in order to create collaborative productions.

→ **GOOGLE DOCS - http://www.google.com/google-d-s/intl/es/tour1.html**

Online presentations

Slideshow presentations made using PowerPoint or Open Office - Impress may also be shared through the Internet, and uploaded to a webpage or blog.

This way, all presentations made during a project can be integrated in the report of the experience and distributed on the web. Also, you can access presentations made by other people around the world, which may help to complement or broaden your information.

→ **SLIDESHARE - http://slideshare.net/**

Maps

Google Maps is a mapping service that can be accessed from any web browser to see basic or customized maps, and find information on local organizations or stores, such as their location, contact information, and directions for getting there.

Maps can be viewed with a traditional presentation of roads, parks, borders, water masses, etc., or with satellite and aerial topography imagery that shows the physical elevation contour with relief shading and elevation lines.

You can also create your own maps to mark points of interest, add information or images, and trace different routes.

For more information, visit:
→ **GOOGLE MAPS**

Calendar

Another tool available online is the Calendar, which allows you to organize a schedule and share it with other participants in the project.

This Calendar can send event reminders through e-mail or text message, and it also links the addresses of the different events to the map (Google Map) to facilitate location and access.

→ **GOOGLE CALENDAR**

Service-Learning in Central and Eastern Europe. Handbook for Engaged Teachers and Students

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