



SLUSIK Piloting Phase Conclusion: Service-Learning for Social Inclusion

Between October 2021 and May 2022, a set of **piloting initiatives** were implemented in the 5 participating countries of the SLUSIK Project (Spain, Ireland, Austria, Croatia, and Slovakia) in collaboration with local CSOs and NGOs. The piloting activities were based on the work done in the **State of Art Report**, and encompassed the testing of an upscaled model of the service-learning curriculum.

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that links the academic curriculum to local problem-solving initiatives. This tool gives students the chance to directly affect change in their communities while acquiring practical skills and knowledge. Students learn to identify common challenges and develop appropriate solutions through non-formal learning methodologies.

The purpose of “**SLUSIK: Service-Learning Upscaling Social Inclusion for Kids**” project is to promote and support social inclusion among school leavers. The actions focus on enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences and fostering the understanding of fundamental values and rights among 12–16-year-olds.

The lack of social and civic competencies amongst school leavers, and especially early school leavers, severely limits their capacity to become socially included adults. By upscaling existing best practices to schools across 5 EU countries, the SLUSIK project aims at addressing the need for a stronger civic education component in the curriculum.

The first piloting phase consisted in a set of **local training activities for teachers and mentors**. These actions were followed by the **implementation of the Toolkit** developed in the framework of the project. Feedback from both students and teachers was collected to gather recommendations for further improvement.

In **Spain**, one of the main takeaways was that more cooperation between NGOs and CSOs is needed to better align the proposed activities with their intended objectives.





Colaiste Ioseaf (left) and Coláiste Mhichíl (right)

In **Ireland**, the integration of the actions inside the curriculum and the good coordination with teachers allowed for a successful piloting in which students were engaged. Colaiste Ioseaf, one of the teachers involved in the initiative, highlights the importance of connecting with the community, and Coláiste Mhichíl, one of the students, thinks that overall, the experience was positive as “in most projects we were stuck at the computer, but in this project we participated practically”.

In **Austria**, both teachers and students showed interest and excitement towards the service-learning model: “With this project children have the possibility to create something useful [...] they make a real difference to everybody involved.” (Role Model/university student PH Wien).



Toys made by students from Austria for the NGO 'Kinderschuh für Osteuropa' (Children Shoes for Eastern Europe)



In **Croatia**, Matea, one of the students, found the initiative useful as it allowed her to learn about teamwork and cooperation and, as a result, she's motivated to keep working in such actions: "We changed things in the school! Everyone knows what we did, and I still can't believe it still."



Matea, student from Croatia

And in **Slovakia**, motivated teachers saw a great potential in service-learning: "The students were thrilled when their physical education teacher taught them how to mix paint, when they could paint the wall in the room where they planned the clubhouse, when they could do demolition work on furniture."



*Students from Slovakia
implementing the activities*



The SLUSIK project is led by the CEV (Belgium) in collaboration with Out of the Box International (Belgium), Rijeka University (Croatia), University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Granada (Spain), University College of Teacher Education, Vienna (Austria), and Matej Bel University (Slovakia). The SLUSIK Project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

For more information, please consult www.slusik.eu or partner's web pages:

- Centre for European Volunteering: <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/>
- Out of The Box International: <https://outofthebox-international.org/>
- University of Limerick: <https://www.ul.ie/>
- University of Granada: <https://www.ugr.es/en>
- Matej Bel University: <https://www.umb.sk/en/>
- The University College of Teacher Education in Vienna: <https://www.phwien.ac.at/university-college-of-teacher-education-overview>
- University of Rijeka: http://iuri.uniri.hr/const_edu/faculty-of-humanities-and-social-

