

SLUSIK STATE OF THE ART REPORT ON SERVICE LEARNING IN EUROPE



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I. Introductory - SLUSIK project and purpose of the report

Service Learning Upscaling Social Inclusion for Kids - SLUSIK project aims to promote and support social inclusion by enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences and fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights in school leavers. While there have been thousands of academic studies worldwide that systematically prove the effectiveness of service-learning at enhancing youth/students' social and civic competences, much more evidence is still needed to prove its effectiveness for secondary school children. This report aims to further explore the concept of service-learning outside of the higher education setting, to analyse the existing service-learning models, types and practices within and outside of the SLUSIK consortium (but still only within European countries), thus to set the grounds for adapting the existing models from higher education institutions in order to create new ones for the secondary schools to be tested.

The report itself is an outcome of several stages of research and analysis that included: (I) desk-top research, (II) development of questionnaires and conducting small-scale studies among academics and other educational professionals, (III) development of interview protocol and conducting interviews with academics who have strong record in service-learning in their everyday teaching at higher education institutions, and (IV) previous research analysis and literature review on the service-learning. Methodological aspects of each of these stages are explained more in depth within each of the subchapters of the report.

2. European Union Context

Service-learning is a pedagogical strategy based on including community engagement in students' curricula. It is normally associated with higher education, where it provides academic credit for education occurring in a traditionally non-formal setting. That way, students contribute to society while they develop academically, civically, and personally, managing to reflect on their experiences in a systematic and critical manner. The three fundamental components of this reciprocal exchange of knowledge are "serving", "reflecting", and "learning". The underlying idea and main achievement of Service-learning is that students become 'whole humans,' with social and personal competences on top of solid academic skills, also encouraging them to become responsible and observer citizens. Moreover, in post-covid life, this strategy will be more important than ever. Uncountable students have faced online education that too often has not allowed them to fully develop their skills; thus, practical experience is more than ever needed.

This technique has a positive impact on society, first, since students, professors, and members of the community come together and they become instructional resources, problem solvers, and partners. Second, because it is a hands-on hands-on experience that aims to fill the gaps from underserved areas and organizations, by providing more complete human assets. Third, when the youth engage in community activities, their responsibility and awareness of social problems increase, encouraging them

to take actions. Fourth, service learning can help transitioners to improve key skills green, entrepreneurial, digital, and lifelong skills to successfully incorporate the labour market, because it is a cooperative way to acquire and develop them. This builds on the recommendations of the GreenComp Organisation (an umbrella organisation focusing on the upskilling and reskilling of green skills of Europe), which states that local authorities should raise awareness of the importance of providing citizens with the appropriate degree of green skills for their personal and professional growth. Thus, it enhances the skills of the youth, facilitating their incorporation into the labour market, easing the transition from school to work of VET and HE students, by promoting engagement in the community and teamwork.

This approach is highly important since, overall, youth unemployment is more than twice adult unemployment in the EU area. School-to-work and Work-Based Learning (WBL) practices, thanks to apprenticeships and internships connected to community services, can help to decrease worrying unemployment among youth, and make the process of employers finding employees with adequate skills easier.

Despite the benefits both for society and students as individuals, these good practices have only been transposed to higher education, in general (there has been a complete lack of transposition of these good practices to middle and secondary schools). In addition to this, the focus on service learning started in the early 2000s, but it was not until recently that academia approached the impact of Service-learning deeply. For example, the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education represents a space for cooperation and exchange of this methodology.

IMPACT:

On the educators' level, service learning curricula that would offer a comprehensive understanding of the background, benefits, and trends/specifics of the ways to help young transitioners to acquire Green skills (as well as digital, entrepreneurial and life) to more easily transition from HE and/or VET to their first job. There is a need to provide a set of tools that would touch not only on specialised tools but also on more basic knowledge.

On the local authority level, can and need to encourage the private sector to participate in the upskilling of the workforce to achieve a fair climate-neutral economy with up-to-date workers' competences. For instance, they could provide short and long-term training or workshops to their employees on environmental and green subjects (Cefefop, 2019) thanks to governmental funds. In this sense, it is imperative to engage SMEs in the green transition, given their importance in the EU business tissue - in 2017, SMEs employed two-thirds of European employees (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2019). For this aim, service learning plays a key role, since it brings together different stakeholders and allows for cooperation. Additionally, these stakeholders, who may include civic society, labor unions, development agencies, and international financial institutions, should also play a vital role in developing and executing training programs, particularly in the area of green skills (Auktor, 2020).

2.1 Relevant policies - Service learning

2.2 Service Learning Projects previously funded by the EU

Based on “European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education”¹ we have included in this report some good practices in Higher Education implemented by the members of this network.

Example 1: CIVIS - A European Civic University Alliance – ERASMUS+ ACTION – KA2

Dates of the project: October 2019 – September 2022

CIVIS is a project Co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. It consists of the development of a European Civic University formed by the alliance of eight leading higher education research institutions across Europe: Aix-Marseille Université, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Universitatea din București, Université libre de Bruxelles, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Sapienza Università di Roma, Stockholm University and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. Rooted in their urban and regional landscapes, our CIVIS member universities actively contribute to the social, cultural and economic dynamism of their ecosystems and promote European values such as inclusiveness, gender equality, non-discrimination and social equity. CIVIS will forge richer interactions and the co-creation of knowledge and skills with citizens, schools, companies and social and cultural associations (CIVIS, 2020).

The mission of CIVIS is to create a truly unique European inter-university campus where students, academics, researchers and staff can move and collaborate as freely as within their institution of origin. We will develop a deep level of European integration, involving joint learning pathways, development of complementary research facilities and diverse degree pathways.

Example 2: Engage Students – Promoting Student Social Responsibility by Embedding Service Learning in Curricula – KA2

Dates of the project: Sept 2018 - 2021

The ENGAGE STUDENTS project focuses on the social responsibility of higher education institutions at student and teacher level. The project's general objective is to empower the social dimension of higher education by increasing its relevance for society through embedding service-learning as a common pedagogical approach within education and research practice. The project's specific objectives are as follows:

- to explore existing service-learning methodology and other forms of community- related learning and research;
- to develop a methodological toolkit and pedagogical workbook to be used by teachers

¹ European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education:
https://www.eoslhe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL-2020-Annual-Report_web.pdf

- to build the critical mass of knowledge and resources needed among partner HEIs to foster the use of service learning and other community-related learning methodologies.

For more information please consult “European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education”: https://www.eoslhe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FINAL-2020-Annual-Report_web.pdf

3. Service-learning: Short intro into the pedagogy, definitions and methodology of SL

There has probably never been a certain teaching and learning method and/or a pedagogy that got such overwhelming research academic attention across the globe, like service-learning has. Until today there have been around 300 000 books and academic (scientific) papers published that discuss different service-learning perspectives, and that number exponentially rises counting all different kinds of published and/or on-line available resources (manuals, guidelines, reports, quality standards, brochures, etc.). Therefore, it is of no surprise that some authors, like Sheffield (2005) for example, argue that service-learning is increasingly “over-defined” pedagogy as there simply are too many definitions of what constitutes the service-learning pedagogy that are all accepted as valid by the service-learning community. Behind his critique lies a concern that “*by defining, and then defining, and then defining again (rather than a reasonable and evolving re-defining) service-learning can by being everything for everyone quickly become nothing*” (Sheffield, 2005:47). However, it seems that the definitions of service-learning will continue to spiral out of control, leaving little or no guidance to practitioners on how to conceive of and then practice this pedagogy.

The purpose of this part of the report is not to compile definitions on service-learning, nor to critically assess existing literature, but to focus on those valid definitions and distinctive characteristics of service-learning that are found valuable for the SLUSIK project and its particular context of upscaling the most common service-learning models from European higher education setting into those for secondary schools, thus aiming to support practitioners from SLUSIK partnering organisations in delivering high quality service-learning projects in their respective secondary schools.

Service-learning is widely recognized in academic literature as an innovative pedagogy that contributes to higher education institutions in fulfilling their multifaceted mission of educating new generations of socially responsible professionals and active citizens. This is why in particular this report focuses on presenting those service-learning definitions and salient characteristics that are related to various educational contexts, and not only to those related with higher education. Such an approach has certain limitations as it might leave out some of the most cited definitions in the academic world that are exclusively related to the higher education context, thus placing service-learning only within academia. However, there is no concern that by such an approach this report will not accomplish its purpose. On the contrary. Placing it within the context of the SLUSIK project, we believe it is actually more important to explore and present all those definitions and characteristics that represent the essence of

service-learning pedagogy, regardless of the contexts and types of educational institutions.

3.1. Service-learning: Definitions

Service-learning is actually quite an ambiguous concept that is used in the literature when referring to various, and not necessarily always compatible notions. There is a set of definitions that focuses on service-learning being a *special approach to teaching* that connects theories and concepts of scientific disciplines with current, real needs and problems in the (local) community and society. Another set of definitions describe it as a *teaching method* that encourages active learning in students. Then there are definitions that place in the front service-learning as an *experiential learning model*. An abundance of definitions focuses on service-learning as a *pedagogical approach* that integrates the study program and commitment to communities. Some authors define service-learning as a *process* of practical and direct application of existing educational resources of higher educational institutions in order to respond to identified community needs. And last, but certainly not the least, service-learning has been conceived in the literature as a *movement for social change*. So at the end, service-learning seems to be all of that - an approach, a teaching method, an experiential learning model, a pedagogy and a movement.

Leaning on such multifaceted nature of service-learning, we present here some of the (selected) definitions that are applicable to various contexts, meaning different educational institutions and/or organisations, and that are sensitive to various youth cohorts.



Figure 1 - Placing service-learning (author unknown)

Service-learning is an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates meaningful community service or engagement into the curriculum and offers to students the academic credit for the learning that derives from active engagement within community and work on a real world problem. Reflection and experiential learning strategies underpin the process and the service is linked to the academic discipline. (McIlrath et al., 2016)

Service-learning provides the opportunity to apply classroom-developed knowledge and skills to a community problem thereby increasing the depth and understanding of that knowledge and skill while solving a community problem through interaction with diverse community stakeholders. (Sheffield, 2005)

Service-Learning (SL) is considered a form of pedagogy which combines the service to community with the learning opportunities offered to the involved students. (Heffernan, 2001)

Service-learning is a teaching and learning methodology which fosters civic responsibility and applies classroom learning through meaningful service to the community. The strongest service-learning experiences occur when the service is meaningfully immersed in ongoing learning and is a natural part of the curriculum that extends into the community. (The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, <http://www.servicelearning.org/>)

Service-learning is any closely monitored service experience where students assume intentional learning goals and actively reflect on what he/she learns from the experience. (Billig, 2000)

Service-learning is a method by which students learn and develop various social and professional competencies through active participation in community-oriented experiences that are connected to their (academic) curricula and provide them with reflective opportunities. (Furco, 2011)

Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity changes both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

(The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, <http://www.servicelearning.org/>)

Service Learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. (<http://www.estrellamountain.edu/servicelearning/sldefinition.asp>)

Service-learning is an academic experiential educational method in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, develop critical thinking skills, and develop an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (<http://www.servicelearning.eku.edu/>)

Service-learning seeks to engage individuals in activities that combine both community service and academic learning. Because service-learning programs are typically rooted in formal courses (core academic, elective, or vocational), the service activities are usually based on particular curricular concepts that are being taught. (Furco, 2002)

Service-learning is a teaching method which combines community service with academic instruction as it focuses on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility. Service-learning programs involve students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.

(Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges)

Service-learning is an educational experience, often, but not always, credit-bearing, in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995)

Service-learning is the name for the various pedagogies that link community service and academic study so that each strengthens the other. The basic theory of service-learning is Dewey's: the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is key to learning. Students learn best not by reading the Great Books in a closed room but by opening the doors and windows of experience. Learning starts with a problem and continues with the application of increasingly complex ideas and increasingly sophisticated skills to increasingly complicated problems. (Ehrlich, 1996)

Service-learning is a form of experiential learning whereby students apply disciplinary skills and knowledge, critical thinking, and wise judgement to address genuine community needs. It is a unique model of teaching because it is designed to simultaneously meet learning objectives/standards, foster youth development and strengthen community life. (Toole and Toole, 1992)

Trying to sum it all up, service-learning is a method of teaching/learning in which students apply academic and civic knowledge and skills in order to address a public societal problem and contribute to the public good. As a type of teaching and learning, service-learning is anchored in social constructivist methods, including inquiry and project planning, to help students meet community needs while at the same time deepening their content area and civic understanding and skills. The use of service-learning reflects a growing understanding that the fundamental mandate of public schools (and higher education institutions) is citizenship education and that the unique qualities of democracies require citizens who are prepared to share in the political process and work collectively for the well-being of society. In other words, to create new (young) cohorts of citizens who are committed to civic engagement and able to effectively carry out the complex responsibilities of democratic public life, schools cannot postpone opportunities for students' civic engagement until an arbitrary age of "readiness." Instead they must engage students in participatory citizenship education, like service-learning is, including critical analysis of various societal problems occurring in their own local communities.

3.2. Service-learning: Key Traits

Service-learning is a multifaceted teaching and learning process that can be uniquely tailored and adapted to different age levels, community needs, and curricular goals. Seeking to engage individuals in thoughtfully structured activities that simultaneously combine and balance both community service and academic learning, service-learning has particular attributes that distinguish this pedagogy from other community-based concepts (e.g. volunteering, internships, project-based learning). Summarizing both, most cited service-learning characteristics in the literature and those respectful of various (educational) contexts and institutional/organisational types, brings following key traits to the forefront, that are also reflected in the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice (NYLC, 2008), developed in the USA.

Authentic and Meaningful Service

Service-learning projects are designed to meet and address the real needs of the community while engaging participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities. Those activities

need to be appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities so that they can understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed. Service-learning projects should be designed so as to lead to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those actors affected by the issue being addressed.

Intentionality and Linkage to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. Service-learning projects should be designed so as to bring classroom learning to life. It means that learning goals need to be clearly articulated and explicitly aligned with the academic curriculum and/or course subject in order to assist participants in learning how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another. Service-learning projects that take place in educational institutions (schools) should be formally recognized in both school policies and student records.

Reflection

Reflection in service-learning presents a meaning-building process that guides the learner through the community-oriented experiences, facilitating the in-depth understanding of relationships and the connections (procedural and effective) between experiences and the concepts being taught within the course/academic programme. Service-learning projects incorporate multiple intellectually and emotionally challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society, as well as about community problems and alternative solutions. Reflection should include a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes, and to support students' various learning styles. Ongoing reflection means that such (different) reflection assignments should occur before, during, and after the service experience. Reflection activities should be designed to encourage participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and better understand their own roles and responsibilities as citizens. In addition, such activities should encourage participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience to better understand the real-life context of connections to public policy and civic life.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Service-learning projects are designed and coordinated in partnerships that are collaborative and mutually beneficial with a shared vision and common goals to address community needs. Partners should collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals. There are a plethora of possible partners to engage, including youth/students and their family members, community based organisations (e.g. museums, libraries, hospitals),

local businesses and entrepreneurs, local institutions (education, culture, health, social care etc.), local authorities, civil society organisations. Partnerships in service-learning projects are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress. Partners usually bring different resources into the partnership that are all equally valued and used to serve the project purpose.

Youth/Students' Engagement and Voice

Service-learning projects should provide youth/students with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating their own service-learning experiences with guidance from adults. Students should be given a space to be involved in the decision-making process throughout their service-learning experiences so as to promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will enhance youth leadership and their participation in decision-making. Together with adults (teachers, partners) students should engage in creating a safe environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas and opinions.

Progress Monitoring

Participants in service-learning projects should keep collecting evidence of progress of their collaborative actions toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes, as well as of the quality of implementations, from multiple sources and throughout all stages of the service-learning project. Collected evidence could contribute to further improvement of planned actions and other elements of a joint service-learning project. Evidence of progress should be communicated among service-learning project partners and with the broader community. Results of the ongoing progress monitoring should be used for improvement and sustainability of service-learning practices.

Duration and Intensity

It is very important for service-learning projects to be organised in a way that provides sufficient duration and intensity to address identified community needs and for students to achieve learning outcomes. Service-learning experiences include the process of community needs assessment, preparation of service activities and their implementations, reflection, monitoring of progress, assessment and evaluation, demonstration of achieved learning outcomes and impacts, and celebration as a moment of closure. Service-learning projects can be organised during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months, or at a slower pace during a whole school year. Either way, there needs to be sufficient time for all the partners and collaborators to be able to engage in all of the phases of the projects, and for all the planned outcomes to be achieved.

Value driven

Service-learning projects aim to foster social and civic responsibility of students, as well as to promote understanding of

diversity and mutual respect among all participants. Service-learning projects should be led in a way to help participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain deeper understanding of multiple perspectives. Participants should actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of collaborators as well as those affected by the societal issue addressed within the service-learning project. Service-learning projects have the potential of participants recognizing and overcoming stereotypes and prejudice.

Due to key characteristics of service-learning as a powerful pedagogical tool, students' learning becomes social, emotional, cognitive, multicultural and interpersonal (Simons & Cleary, 2006). Through service-learning, students can develop skills that can further help them to observe, identify and distinguish other people's emotions, manage (evaluate and regulate) their own emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, take responsible decisions, cope with new interpersonal situations and improve their academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). Also, through the reflection component and the connection to the curricular content, service-learning offers the students and the teaching staff opportunities to explore and to understand social perspectives by harnessing and investigating the individual differences in cognitive and emotional patterns that can be revealed during the learning process (Alexander and Chomsky, 2008 apud Copaci & Rusu, 2015). Students benefit from service learning as a real-world application of their academic learning while they are still in school. Service-learning approach offers them a real platform to question, investigate, analyze, practice, review, reassess, and reflect, all with the guidance and support of knowledgeable teachers. Service-learning helps them see the applicability, viability and purpose of their study, while building their understanding of both academic content and its relation to various societal issues, and deepend at the same time their own learning.

3.3. Service-learning: Process and Stages

Much of the literature tends to illustrate service-learning projects as a sequential process with a certain number of stages leaning on and following each other. Regardless of the number of stages (and there are models with a range of four to usually up to six stages) and nuances in their framing, there is quite a coherent scenario on how to organise one service-learning project.

Cathryn Berger Kaye model (2004) present service-learning process through five main stages



Figure I - Process and Stages (author unknown)

consisting of:

- 1) Investigation
- 2) Preparation,
- 3) Action,
- 4) Reflection, and
- 5) Demonstration.

Quite similarly for the IPARD cycle and later own adopted version of the IPARDE model, the service-learning process takes students through the stages of:

- 1) Investigation
- 2) Preparation
- 3) Action
- 4) Reflection
- 5) Demonstration and
- 6) Evaluation

Investigation includes both the inventory of student interest, skills, and talents, and the social analysis of the issue being addressed. This analysis requires gathering information about the identified need through action research that includes use of varied approaches: media, interviews of experts, survey of varied populations, and direct observation/personal experiences.

Preparation includes the continued acquisition of knowledge that addresses any resultant questions from investigation along with academic/course/subject content, identification of groups already working towards solutions, organization of a plan with clarification of roles, responsibilities and timelines, and ongoing development of any skills needed to successfully carry the plan to fruition.

Action includes the implementation of the plan that usually takes the form of direct service, indirect service, advocacy, or research. Action is always planned with mutual agreement and respect with partners so this builds understanding and multiple perspectives of issues tackled within the service-learning projects.

Reflection is the connector between each stage of service and also summative. Through reflection students consider their thoughts and feelings (cognition and affect) regarding any overarching essential question or inquiry that is a driving force of the total experience. Reflection informs how the process develops, increases self awareness, assists in developing future plans, and employs varied multiple intelligences.

Demonstration captures the overall 'package' of the experience including what has been learned, the process of the learning, the quality of the partnership and the service or contribution accomplished. Beginning with investigation, students document all parts of the process, resulting in a complete and comprehensive ability to tell the story of what took place during each stage that includes key informative reflection. Students draw upon their skills and talents in the manner of demonstration, often integrating various technologies, according to their age and level of ability.

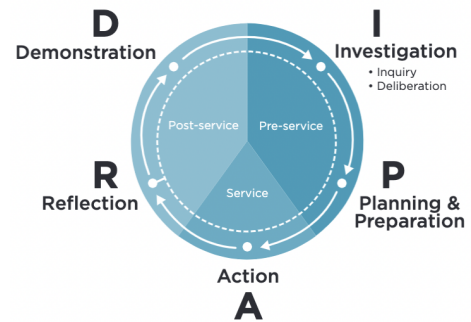


Figure II - Stages (author unknown)

Another recently developed model in Europe is **SLIHE 4-step model**² (2020) with four key stages being (I) Preparation and planning, (II) Implementation, (III) Assessment & Evaluation and (IV) Closure & celebration, but including the **cross-sectional ongoing process** of Reflection, Communication & Promotion, and Monitoring & Documenting.

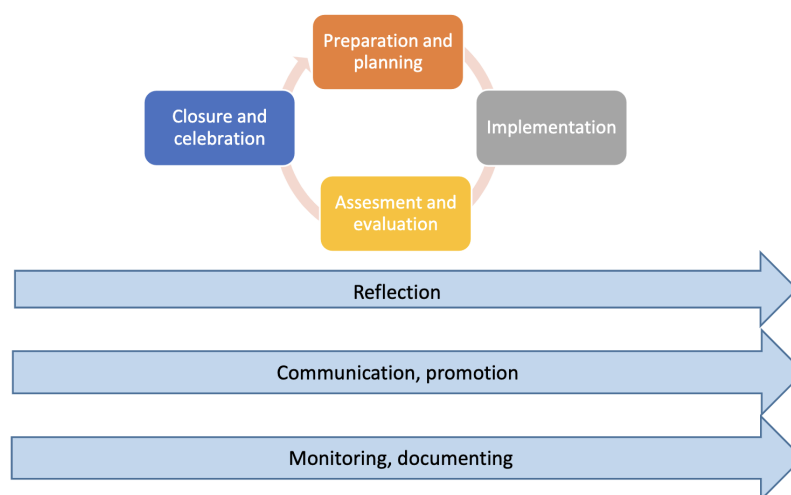


Figure III - Stages (author unknown)

The first step of this model - **preparation & planning** - is divided into two main parts as it focuses on various and usually external prerequisites needed for the preparation of the service-learning implementation and in addition the planning of the service-learning based course/project. Depending on the environment in which service-learning is planned to be conducted, different steps can be taken, considering if there is previous experience, or if service-learning course/project is a novelty that will take place for the first time; considering if there is already a service-learning favoring environment and management support, or if teaching staff needs to yet create such a supportive mechanisms; considering if there are already established partnerships between educational institutions and other actors in the community, or teaching staff needs to build such networks from the scratch; considering if there is an institutional educational ethos that encourages students' engagement in the community, or is such ethos still framed as a vision that needs to be further developed; and of course, considering the youth cohort teaching staff want to engage, as that implies differences in their motivation, in their interests, as well as in their level of development and capacities to engage. There are several interconnected steps in this stage to be considered although they don't need to sequentially follow each other, and are largely dependent on the previously mentioned supporting structures within the institutional environment. Each of the steps can inform the next one, and significantly contribute to the process of shaping the service-learning course/project from the initial idea to a firm plan. Those steps are: (I) analysis of the needs of the school, (II) analysis of the needs of the students, (III) analysis of the needs of the community and local community organizations, (IV) setting goals for implementing the service-learning strategy, and

² SLIHE 4-step model was developed as part of the Erasmus+ SLIHE project (Service-learning in higher education – fostering the third mission of universities and civic engagement of students). For more info please visit <http://www.slihe.eu/project-overview/description>. The SLIHE Manual for HEI Teachers with detailed descriptions of all stages is available online for free download at http://www.slihe.eu/images/stories/files/O1/O2/Manual_O2_English_Final_Version.pdf.

(V) identifying supporting structures. To put it simply at the end, this stage needs to result with a clear idea of what (societal) issue will be addressed via service-learning course/project, what actors are going to be part of the project and what are their roles, expectations and responsibilities, in what service activities are students going to be engaged, how are those activities linked with the curriculum (what knowledge, skills, and information are needed to carry out the activity and what are the expected service and learning goals), and how will they be assessed in later stages.

The second step of the SLIHE model - **implementation** - refers to setting up and managing the overall framework and each step of the service-learning project that is put in action. Depending on the context-specific situations, this stage can include the following: securing all the necessary resources (both material and human), agreements with external community partners, implementation of planned service activities inside and/or outside the educational institutions, while managing at the same time the accomplishment of both service and learning goals. While the quality of partnerships with any kind of actors as well as students' voice in decision making and engagement is very important, the crucial role is still on the teaching staff, particularly if engaging younger students/pupils. Teaching staff is seen as an important facilitator of the whole process and they need to oversee each step. The level of their engagement in facilitating is, among other things, dependent on the service-learning model as well as the years of students engaged, but is mainly focused on creating a safe and creative environment for students' learning while engaging in various service activities inside and/or outside of their immediate school and/or local community.

The third step of the SLIHE model - **assessment and evaluation** - includes both assessing the achieved service and learning goals and evaluating the whole process and actors' contributions as part of the service-learning project. Assessment is therefore more focused on students and is usually dependent on both the institutional and/or course practices in assessing students' accomplished knowledge and skills, and the nature of the service-learning project itself. It is important for the teaching staff to assess students' academic accomplishments according to previously set up learning goals, and not to mix such learning outcomes with those of service. On the other hand, evaluation is there not to assess or grade, but to inform all actors included in the service-learning project on their joint accomplishments and challenges from which lessons learnt can be transferred into new/future opportunities. This is why it is important that everyone has a voice in this stage, and that every aspect of the process can be critically and constructively analyzed. Evaluation can take various forms and it particularly depends on the youth cohort engaged, so both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or simple conversations with guided questions to reflect upon).

The fourth step of the SLIHE model - **closure and celebration** - refers to a formal closure of the service-learning course/project itself and celebration of achieved service and learning goals. As any other project, service-learning projects should have starting and ending points that might be, depending on the context, defined by a certain date (e.g. end of the course/semester/school year) or a certain closure activity performed by students engaged. Celebration is considered to be a very valuable moment in service-learning projects, no matter the youth cohort engaged. However, depending on the youth age, celebration events can take various forms, and can be organised inside and/or outside of the educational institution, with various actors engaged (community partners, parents, other important stakeholders)

and with media coverage that might bring additional value to the service-learning project and institution's visibility in the community. Celebration events can therefore be a simple gathering with 'thank you' notes, or for example a public event where students present their accomplishments. Either way, it is important, particularly having younger students in mind, to celebrate their community engagement and accomplished service and learning goals, as that might have an impact for their future motivation in the context of engaging in new service-learning projects, as well as for their own future civic engagement in (local) community.

The **cross-sectional ongoing processes of Reflection, Communication & Promotion, and Monitoring & Documenting** are seen as integral parts of the whole-approach in service-learning courses/projects.

Reflection is by far one of the most important "ingredients" of service-learning courses/projects as it assists students in aligning service and learning goals. Without facilitated reflection, service-learning stays within the framework of "simple" community service. Reflection serves students in multifaceted forms of broadening their horizons, knowledge and skills in the context of learning about certain societal issues and making meaningful connections with theoretical concepts that are part of the curriculum/course/subject; it helps them in raising awareness of their own attitudes and prejudices, of their own emotions, as well as of the emotional dispositions of others, particularly those affected by the societal issues addressed within the service-learning project; it allows them to (re)consider their own current and future role of socially responsible and active citizen. Reflection functions in a way that the context of students' learning in the classroom informs and shapes their own engagement in the community, while that engagement and context of learning while serving the community empowers their learning of curricular concepts taught. Considered as an ongoing process, structured reflection includes reflection before, during and after students' engagement in the community as part of the service-learning project, as portrayed in the following figure.

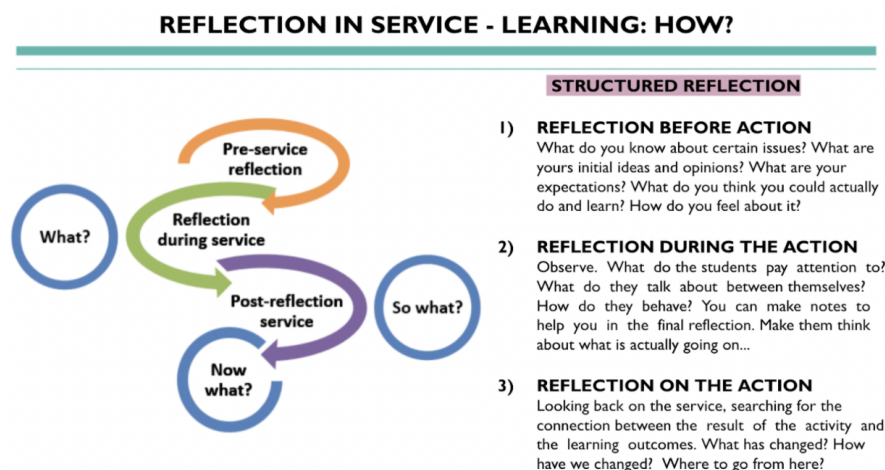


Figure XY. Reflection in service-learning (created by authors)

Depending on the youth cohort engaged, as well as in the context of nurturing different learning styles that students have, reflection can take many intellectual, emotional and creative forms, and there

are various models of critical reflection developed in literature. Presented in the following figure there are various reflection variations for teaching staff to consider for their own service-learning courses/projects.

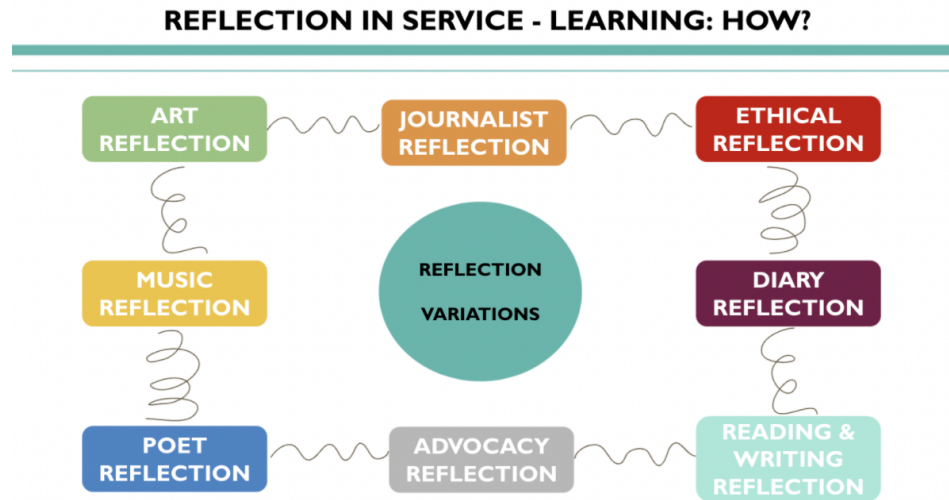


Figure XY. Reflection variations in service-learning (created by authors)

Communication and promotion as an ongoing process refers to continuous sharing of information among all of the participants in a service-learning project - within the (educational) institution (management, other teaching staff, students), and with actors outside of the institutions (community partners, parents, other relevant stakeholders, community in general). For a service-learning project to be successful there need to be effective communication channels that engage all the participants and the community served. Those communication channels can serve the basics of informing participants, attracting others to join and participate, raising awareness of certain societal issues addressed within the service-learning project, communicating outcomes accomplished within and outside of the educational environment, thus raising both service-learning and institutional visibility, and particularly promoting youth engagement in the community.

Monitoring & Documenting as an ongoing process considers monitoring and documenting of everything that is going on within the particular service-learning project, and is therefore important to think about it even before the project itself starts. Such an approach can serve multiple purposes and have equally multiple benefits as it allows for various service activities and learning moments to be captured in real-time and later used for celebration and promotion of service-learning pedagogy, of collaborations and partnerships developed, of institutional and individual social responsibility, and of youth engagement in the community. In addition, if developed as an ongoing process it informs the reflection, assessment and evaluation as well. There are multiple ways of documenting the 'story' around service-learning project and again, depending on the youth cohort engaged, it can take various forms and formats and every actor can be engaged (e.g. web page, blog, project and students' portfolios, audio and video materials, multimedia, etc.). What is important is for those engaged to respect certain institutional and community partners' policies on privacy, and therefore to tailor the process and forms of

monitoring and documenting in a way to follow GDPR, being respectful about the subjects that will be publicly available.

3.4. Service-learning: Types of Service & Examples

Although there are different perspectives in setting up the types/models of students' engagement in service-learning projects (particularly depending on the level of education and youth cohort involved), there is a high consensus among experts and various service-learning related organisations that there are **four basic types of service** in service-learning projects - (I) direct, (II) indirect, (III) research and (IV) advocacy.

Direct service-learning is a type of service that directly affects people, animals or places we want to impact. These are usually organised as person-to-person, face-to-face service projects in which the students engage directly with individuals receiving the service. This may include tutoring other students and adults, volunteering with minority groups, conducting art/music/dance lessons for youth, helping in a homeless shelter, helping animals in an animal shelter, or cleaning up a park in the neighbourhood.

Indirect service-learning is a type of service in which you are not in the presence of a person or a thing you are impacting. These kinds of projects usually focus on broad issues and are organised as environmental projects, or community development - projects that have clear benefits to the community or environment, but not necessarily to individually identified people with whom the students are working. Examples can include compiling a town history, restoring historic structures or building low-income housing, removing invasive plants and restoring ecosystems in preserve areas for public use, building birdhouses in local or school park, or organising a fundraising event to help underprivileged people, animals or places we want to impact.

Research-based service-learning is a type of service focused on gathering and presenting information on areas of interest and need projects that find, gather, and report on information that is needed for a certain action that might follow or decision making. Examples can include gathering information on available community services and writing a guide, conducting small-scale surveys among neighbourhood residents, gathering information and creating brochures or videos for non-for-profit organisations, or water testing for local residents.

Advocacy service-learning is a type of service dominantly focused on raising awareness and/or educating others about topics of public interest. These kinds of projects usually aim to create awareness and action on some issues that impact the community. Examples can include planning and putting on public forums on topics of interest in the community, conducting public information campaigns on topics of interest or local needs, working with elected officials to draft legislation to improve communities, or organising a 'bird night' in school neighborhood to inform everyone about the importance of saving birds' home.

Additionally, the literature has a few examples of another variant of service-learning in which older students, usually third education students, act as role models or mentors of other younger students in S-L experiences. Indeed, emerging literature on mentoring within S-L has shown that mentoring as a

service-learning experience is associated with similar gains to participating in any other service-learning experience. In this sense, positioning a youth mentoring program within the context of a service-learning course holds promise for simultaneously benefiting program participants and the supporting role models (see Appendix A for further information).

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4. Service-learning in Europe

While service-learning as a pedagogy has been deeply rooted in various educational institutions around the globe within the last five decades (particularly in the USA, Latin America, Canada and Australia), it has just recently, within the last decade, occupied the attention of European higher education institutions and interested academics. Following favorable EU policies that have been focusing more on the role of universities in contributing to the regional development throughout their third mission, there have been more and more service-learning EU funded projects (both research and those

developmental ones), national and regional formal and non-formal networks, conferences, educational trainings for teaching staff, books, academic articles, manuals, guidelines, as well as recommendations for institutionalising service-learning in higher education institutions.

As reported within the Europe Engage project (2016), some countries and residing universities have made strong headway in terms of growth and development, others are at nascent stages of development with a desire for deeper support and adoption of this pedagogical approach. Higher education institutions around Europe are for sure at different stages of institutionalisation with just some having dedicated supporting structures, like centres, but majority still with no support infrastructure, thus residing on academics' enthusiasm. Still, the progress has been noted, especially by the European Observatory of Service-learning in Higher Education, in which database there are currently more than 100 practices of service-learning projects collected, coming from 19 European countries. In addition, following the recent COVID-19 pandemic, there are around 30 service-learning practices in response to COVID-19 shared, coming from 12 European countries.

Service-learning grows in popularity within higher education areas in Europe, but at the same time there is actually very little evidence of its performativity in other educational institutions (e.g. secondary schools). Considering language diversity around Europe, it needs to be noted that this report has a certain limitation in that context, as only data available in English was part of the analysis. Authors want to note therefore that we don't claim that service-learning practices don't exist within European secondary schools, but gathering data and evidence on the matter has yielded no results (except for the Netherlands, though published papers on this particular case are very clear about many practices introduced in to schools not actually following service-learning principles, and being limited to volunteering or other forms of community service). However, knowing the slow pace of service-learning entrance within the European higher education sector, one can not presume that it has been a different case with secondary schools, on the contrary, knowing there are different national educational backgrounds and policies framing national educational systems.

4.1. Short country background - SLUSIK project countries

4.1.1. Austria

Service-learning as a didactic method can be seen as relatively new for the (higher) education area in Austria as it has been a matter of subject only within the last decade. This is why, as stated by Fernandez & Slepcevic-Zach (2018) hardly any publications can be found within Austria that deal with the service-learning from a scientific perspective. A growing interest in the SL approach can be observed in connection with the renewed awareness of the civil society tasks of universities and colleges following the Bologna process, which may be in the sense of a "third mission" (Resch, K., 2018) or the discourse of an "engaged university" (Lassnigg, L., Trippl, M., Sinozic, T. & Auer, A., 2012). The institutional anchoring of SL in Austria is not bound to a national policy, but is subject to that of the individual universities themselves. Recent development related with SL in Austria put focus on the academic teacher education, where the possibilities and forms of using the SL in various modes of

university-school collaboration are increasingly being discussed (Resch & Schrittester, 2019; Weber et al., 2018). In the academic year 2015/2016, the Private University of Education, Diocese of Linz, in cooperation with the volunteer centre of Upper Austria, started the project “Lernen. Engagement, Verantwortung. (L.E.V.)”, where students engage in social facilities and apply the theory and knowledge gained at courses into the field, building their own competences (Böhmer & Hueber-Mascherbauer, 2018). Just a year after that, at the University College for Teacher Education in Vienna in 2017, a compulsory module called “Service Learning” with a focus on health and science was established and anchored in the curriculum. This university envisages the completion of practical research in teacher training, in which students are involved in solving practical problems of concrete school operations in close cooperation with schools outside of their own lessons.

Austria currently does not have its own national SL network and most of the HEIs and academics themselves are often members of the German university network “Bildung durch Verantwortung”. Since 2010, in cooperation with four Viennese universities (University of Vienna, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Technology University Vienna & the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna) and supported by the Austrian Development Agency, the initiative “Sustainability Challenge” was set up that selects every year students to plan and carry out SL projects or social entrepreneurship projects with community partners. During such initiatives, students receive theoretical knowledge from prestigious lectures and have the chance to transfer it directly into practice. In summary, the SL in the Austrian Higher Education is still in its early stages of development, but having many academics engaged in recent EU-funded Erasmus+ projects, like EUROPE ENGAGE (University of Applied Sciences, KREMS), SLIHE (SL in Higher Education-Fostering the third mission of universities and civic engagement of students, Danube University KREMS), UNIBILITY (University Meets Social Responsibility, University of Vienna) or ENGAGE STUDENTS (University of Vienna), has created a community that is researching this approach more and more and is offering support in SL didactic implementation at universities.

4.1.2 Belgium

Service-learning, as a pedagogical concept, has just recently become a subject of interest in the academic community. Belgium is member of the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE-EASLHE), born in 2017 following the 2014 “Euroge Engage” Erasmus+ KA2 project, that aimed to share knowledge and gather good practices on European Service-Learning³. The majority of the advancements in service-learning research and implementation have occurred in the recent decade. Belgium's federal political structure means that S-L policies can be implemented at the national and community levels - Flanders, Wallonia, and the Brussels-Capital Region.

The University of Ghent was one of the first to take action. In 2012, they established a university-wide SL course for 3rd-year bachelor students as part of a pilot study to examine the possibilities of SL (“coaching and diversity”)⁴. SL began bottom-up at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) two years later, with a pilot course in Chinese Studies. By 2019, it had expanded its reach to include six SL courses across the university. Meanwhile, an SL team has been formed to assist with all of

³ More information available at: <https://www.eoslhe.eu/europe-engage/>

⁴ More information on Service-Learning in Belgium available at: <https://www.eoslhe.eu/service-learning-in-belgium/>

these and upcoming courses. Other universities in Flanders have lately adapted SL to the local setting.

In the last two years, certain initiatives have been also made in Wallonia (for example, at the universities of Namur and Liège). While universities have only lately begun to investigate the concept of SL, Flanders vocational schools have long been experimenting with comparable field-based concepts. They have a wealth of prior experience in experiential education and are connected to a variety of non-school stakeholders in their community. At a national level, SL is regularly and profoundly linked to a long history of 'Science Shops', where students conduct research for non-profit organizations as part of their thesis.

The universities mentioned above pledged to incorporate SL into their teacher education programs in 2015. In 2019, an informal network was developed in Flanders to bring together all existing experience, skill, and knowledge in an appreciated manner. Vocational schools and universities collaborate within this network, sharing best practices and information. These HEIs also organized the 2nd European Service-Learning Conference, which was held in Antwerp in September of 2019.

The positive impact of SL has motivated universities to increase the number of courses on service learning. KU Leuven developed around 25 SL pilot projects between 2016 and 2020. Last academic course, they offered 25 service-learning courses across four campuses and eleven of their faculties in collaboration with more than 80 community partners. Over 800 KU Leuven students successfully interacted with their communities⁵. Additionally, for the academic year 2021-2022 the university launched a call for pilot programmes on SL proposals to educators, in order to develop SL courses⁶.

4.1.3. Croatia

First efforts of establishing 'real' service-learning courses at higher education level in Croatia can be traced to late 90's and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Rijeka - a module titled "Education for Civil Society Development" was launched in academic year 1997/98 at the Department of Pedagogy. At the time, the module consisted of three courses - Education for Civil Society Development, Pedagogy of Leisure Time and Experiential Learning in Extracurricular Activities - and all three courses lasted throughout the whole academic year. Following their own (professional) interests, students were expected to establish a sustainable relationship with local NGOs, engage in particular projects and activities that could reflect upon and contribute to certain issues of local importance, and ultimately report on their engagement through various assignments and forms of reflective diaries.

Similar initiatives (although not always set up to follow service-learning principles) started to appear at different universities from early 2000 onward, however embedded dominantly in the field of social sciences. Academics from the University of Rijeka (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economics) and from the University of Zagreb (Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Political Science and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences) were those bringing service-learning pedagogy and innovations in higher education teaching and learning. Such initiatives were sporadic,

⁵ More information on the academic year 2020-2021 available at:
<https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/sl/servicelearningatkuleuven/pilotprojects>

⁶ More information on the Call available at: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/sl/educators>

usually without any particular institutional support and embedded in elective, rather than mandatory courses.

The first impulse for more sustainable service-learning courses appeared in 2017 within the Operational Program "Effective Human Resources 2014-2020" of the European Social Fund. The Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Republic of Croatia, as an intermediate body of level I within the mentioned operational programme, issued a Decision on Financing the Calls for Proposals for the Project Proposals *Support to the development of partnerships of civil society organizations and higher education institutions for the implementation of service learning programmes.*⁷ The overall goal of the call was to increase the number of students who acquired practical knowledge and skills for solving specific social problems and contributing to community development. Its specific objectives were the following: (I) To strengthen the professional, analytical and advocacy capacities of civil society organizations through cooperation with higher education institutions, and (II) To establish sustainable service-learning programmes at higher education institutions as part of a systematic approach for strengthening social responsibility of academics and students. It was the first time in Croatia (and probably in Europe as well) that part of the ESF programme targeted directly development of service-learning programmes/courses at higher education level, allocating around 3,6 mil EUR to the call, and eventually to twenty-four (funded) projects.

The call contributed (and still contributes) significantly to the promotion of service-learning pedagogy in Croatia. Five national public universities - University of Zagreb, University of Split, University of Rijeka, University of Osijek and University of Dubrovnik (precisely their constituents) as well as several universities of applied sciences engaged as partnering institutions with NGOs who were formally set up as projects' applicants. Network(s) of partnering institutions formed around those twenty four projects, show diversity and variety of both (academic) disciplinary fields as well as partners' legal status and fields of work. These projects therefore serve as a platform for collaboration between NGOs (working in the field of education, health and social care, politics and public policy, minorities, human rights, LGBT, homelessness, sustainability, political participation etc.), professional associations, research institutes, local and regional volunteer centres, state agencies and centres, and students' associations.

Most of the projects were/are organised around quite similar platform, offering educational trainings for academics and other partnering organisations, service-learning presentational workshop for students, developing manuals for service-learning 'beginners' and other useful materials (available both off and online), setting up working groups for discussing possibilities and forms for joint development of higher education service-learning courses, setting up university/faculty centres for service-learning (e.g. Faculty of Economics at The University of Split), organising and engaging in various public events and conferences to further promote service-learning and the idea of university social responsibility.

Among such was *The First Croatian Conference on Service-learning at Universities: Environment and Sustainable Development Education in Croatia*, organised by the Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development Sunce and their partnering faculties from the University of Split.⁸ The conference gathered around sixty participants (academics, professionals, NGOs, students, funding agencies) who engaged in the exchange of an existing knowledge, experience and challenges related with the implementation of service learning courses in both national and international context. The conference served as an important platform for connecting some of the major actors of

⁷ More information available at <https://udruge.gov.hr/highlights/eu-programmes/european-social-fund-4849/4849>

⁸ More info about the conference available at <https://udrugasunesplit.wixsite.com/pazi-conference/copy-of-home>

service-learning programmes/courses in Croatia. An initiative for establishing a first service-learning network in Croatia is among major conference results, as well as conference proceedings published (both in print version and online), as the first of such a kind, exclusively focused on papers related to service-learning in the national higher education arena.

Described initiatives are quite recent and therefore it remains to see their further development. However, major developments of service-learning in Croatian higher education have been documented within the past several years, and it remains now to follow future progress and engage more into research, as to better inform future 'evolution' of service-learning in Croatia.

4.1.4. Ireland

Engagement with society is an integral part of the Irish higher education policy landscape and engaged learning (service learning) has existed in some form since the early 2000s. In 2008 Campus Engage at the Irish Universities Association was designed to support Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to embed, scale and promote societal engagement across staff and student teaching, learning and research for societal impact. All seven of the Irish universities and the Technological University of Dublin are represented by Campus Engage and participate in community-based Teaching and Learning (engaged or service learning). www.campusengage.ie.

The *National Strategy for Higher Education, 2030* refers to civic and community engagement as one of the "three core roles of higher education". Irish engaged researchers and teachers, across all disciplines, have a well-established history of working with external partners including public services, policy makers and civil and civic society organisations, to provide collaborative solutions to societal challenges. Underpinning this, the *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020* metrics refer specifically to engaged teaching and research activity.

Some HEIs in Ireland have dedicated Community Civic Engagement Offices or Teaching and Learning centres with personnel equipped to support and direct student engaged learning, or research experiences, and community-based projects. The StudentVolunteer.ie website has also been developed as a simple portal connecting third level students in Ireland (domestic and international) with CSO volunteering opportunities.

In addition, all third level education policy drivers in Ireland respond in different ways to the United Nations' *Sustainable Development Goals*. Irish HEIs have increasingly included these goals into their strategies and policies, to address local and global challenges. (<https://www.campusengage.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Campus-Engage-Engaged-Research-Policy-Briefing-for-HEIs-Published.pdf>)

While local, national policies and funding opportunities in Ireland support engaged teaching and learning there are still significant challenges to scaling up across the Irish higher education landscape to include primary and secondary levels. These include:

- Lack of institutional infrastructure to support and maintain community partnerships;

- Little recognition for engaged teaching and learning activities or the amount of time involved, and few career pathways for sustaining or growing engaged teaching and learning networks in the local community.
- A focus on one-off engagements with CSOs, rather than long-term ongoing collaborations.
- Little training to facilitate and support engagement and participation by community partners.

The experience of COVID-19 in Ireland has further highlighted that to tackle societal challenges effectively, everybody will need to work together, and this is especially true of all levels of education. Connectedness with communities is now considered pivotal to rebuilding the social and economic wellbeing of Ireland and the EU., and has further strengthened the Irish universities commitment to engaged (service) learning.

4.1.5. Slovakia

The development of SL in Slovakia is strongly influenced by the historical and current social and political movements, and its steel in its early stage. Traditionally anchored in their academic pillar of teaching and research, many HEIs in Slovakia are still not open to cooperation with public and non-governmental organizations in their region, and they have not yet developed sufficient capacities to participate in the resolution recent years, this strategy has been spreading, especially from one of the Slovak universities—Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, and in cooperation with the Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organizations (PDCO), and Volunteer Centre in Banská Bystrica of local, regional, or national challenges and problems. Therefore, there are universities in which the term and concept of SL is completely new, and without any of such practices in teaching, while there are universities recognised as leaders in the field, such as Matej Bel University is, for example. The specificity of SL development in Slovak conditions is its connection with the education for volunteering and civic engagement. In 2018, the Strategy for Education of Children and Youth for Volunteering in Slovakia was adopted by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport, and opened the floor for SL initiatives. The strategy itself is based on the principles of SL pedagogy, and its goal is to create the prerequisites for the implementation of education for volunteering at all levels of education, including universities. There is no national network of universities involved in SL, but MBU is actively involved in the Service-Learning Network in Central and Eastern Europe. Pointing out MBU seems very convenient in this particular context as the experts working on that universities have invested into upscaling the service-learning principles and models into high schools in the region, and some of them participated in the first regional CEE Service-learning Award competition.

4.1.6. Spain

Spain is probably that one European country that first introduced service-learning within its higher education landscape as the beginning of SL in Spanish universities can be placed at the very beginning of the 21st century. It was during the 2000-2010 decade when the number of SL experiences grew significantly at universities across Spain. In 2001 the Committee of Rectors of Spanish Universities stated

that universities should assume a leading role in the human development processes, exploring and applying new strategies with the aim of developing a fair and participatory society through volunteering, cooperation, and working in the third sector. Fourteen years later, the Spanish ministerial Department for Education disclosed the '2015 University Strategy' in which the modernization process of the Spanish university was framed. The purpose was to shape a new social model and a new educational model at the Spanish university. It encouraged the use of teaching and learning practices that contribute to development of professional skills and social responsibility competencies of undergraduate and graduate students. As a part of the strategy in 2015 the Committee of Rectors of Spanish Universities together with the working group of the sustainability commission (CADEP by its name in Spanish) proposed the institutionalization of SL as a strategy to channel the university social responsibility, to promote the sustainability of the University itself.

This framework facilitated the beginning of the institutionalization of SL in Higher Education. At that time, only 6 universities out of 87 of them in Spain had formal policies at the central level related to SL. Currently there are at least 40 universities (45.9%) across Spain in which SL is included in already existing subjects or within new developed ones, although there is significant variability depending on the institution in terms of the frequency, institutional spreadness and sustainability. The University Service-Learning Network was created in 2010 with the support of the Institute of Education Sciences (ICE) of the University of Barcelona. This informal network, which holds an annual conference of SL in Higher Education in Spain, aims to promote the exchange, and joint work for the promotion, recognition, and improvement of SL projects across the Spanish universities. In 2017, the University Service-Learning Association (ApSU) was created with the aim of constituting a legal entity that contributes to strengthening the practice and investigation of SL. Additionally, the national law 45/2015 on volunteering included two articles 6(f) and 18(f) recommending service-learning programs, among others, to train volunteers in the principles and values of volunteering in all stages, cycles, degrees, courses and levels of the educational system..."

4.2. Short country background - Other countries

4.2.1. Germany

The [Stiftung Lernen durch Engagement](#) ("learning through engagement" or short: LdE) is a German organisation/foundation that promotes service-learning. The foundation's vision is to promote service-learning throughout Germany to support democratic values, in which all citizens develop competencies individually through service-learning, to equally take on responsibilities and to live in solidarity with others. This enables cohesion, values diversity, mutual empathy, equality and democracy.

LdE provides a national network with schools in all sixteen German states, which usually tend to differ in their approaches on schooling and volunteering as these are seen as state matters. However, there are currently nine committed model schools in Saxony-Anhalt, Bavaria and Berlin which participated in service-learning for the first time in the academic year of 2014/15. The focus was on how values can be created through service-learning in MINT subjects (Maths, IT, Science and Technology).

This was inspired by the American approach and adjusted to the German context, creating the LdE educational quality standards, which offer material such as method sheets, particle guidebooks and web-based training for teachers. Here, service-learning is conceptualised as a combination of students' social commitment with professional learning, students standing up for the common good and doing something good for others and for society in general.

Some thematic cooperation projects include 'LdE & value creation', 'LdE & migration - interpersonal', 'LdE & migration - future opportunities', 'LdE & professional orientation' and 'LdE & democracy education in digital world' (among others).

Courses are offered in both, primary and secondary schools and can be applied to subjects ranging from Biology, Chemistry, Civics and Politics, Ethics, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Mathematics, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Physics and Technology. Certain schools also offer so called LdE Awards ("Schulpreis Lernen durch Engagement"). The award honours schools from the LdE network for their good and innovative pedagogical work along the LdE quality standards.

The national LdE Conference ("Die bundesweite Service-Learning-Tagung") connects people from educational practice, civil society, research, administration and politics to come together and work on changing educational experiences of children and young people. The focus is on exchange, training, and inspiration around one's own work with LdE in current educational contexts.

Overall, LdE offers a wide range of information on German service-learning, however, most information is currently only available in German. The exception is service-learning in STEM subjects which can be found [here](#), that entails guides available in German, Spanish and English.

4.2.2. Netherlands

In the early 2000s, service-learning programs were not offered in the Netherlands. This changed in the academic year 2003-2004 when staff at the Rotterdam School of Management (Erasmus University) introduced the first service-learning initiatives to their business students. Judith van der Voort, Lucas Meijs and Gail Whiteman grasped an opportunity to introduce service-learning in the Netherlands when they were invited to do a research on 'can a USA educational approach involving nonprofit organizations also work in a different non-profit regime'.

A course was developed and a research was conducted to show that the (perceived) USA concept of service-learning would also be valid and of value in a different institutional context. Interviews were conducted to evaluate the perceptions of Dutch students about this new form of education after participating in one of three different initiatives. The initiatives varied in degree of intensity, to find out if the perception changes when involvement increases. Fortunately, the result supported our expectations. Since that time, Rotterdam School of Management has offered service-learning courses every year. Recently, other faculties and universities in the Netherlands have started to introduce service-learning courses as well. (EOSLHE, 2019)

One of the universities that joined was the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, which became the first university in the Netherlands to integrate Community Service Learning into their educational programme. Their ambition is to see its goals reflected in the learning objectives of study programmes and to ensure that students receive course credit for their hard work. For example, some of the Health

Sciences students went off campus for six weeks to survey the needs of Waterlandpleinbuurt area residents in Amsterdam North. Ymere and the District of Noord commissioned the survey and were able to use the findings from more than 80 interviews to conclude that residents experienced problems in three areas: nuisance caused by people, waste, and language barriers.

Besides universities, Netherlands also has organisations like Movisie, which is the national knowledge institute offering a comprehensive approach to social issues. Their social domain is continually changing, reflecting in different relationships between governments, professionals and citizens who need knowledge that works in a changing society. They support and counsel civil society organisations, governments, social entrepreneurs and civic initiatives. Local or national, focused on the issue at hand and at the organization.

Last, In 2007 the Dutch government introduced a law to implement Service Learning into the Dutch secondary school curriculum. This would help young people to develop necessary skills to participate in society. Every pupil engages in 30 hours of community service. The pupil would take part in the activities of the non-profit sector.

4.2.3. Switzerland

In Switzerland, Inter Community School Zurich and TASIS school promote service-learning. Service-learning is an integral part of the entire TASIS curriculum, inspiring students to think beyond themselves and assume active roles in improving society. The service-learning program reflects the School's overall commitment to encouraging sound human values alongside academic excellence⁹. In TASIS, the service-learning in the Elementary School works closely with the programs in the Middle School and High School. The goal is to build a cohesive program in which the learning of the youngest students may be tracked through the oldest students. The service learning program strives to make students aware of the issues that surround them at a local and global level. Each grade level works closely with a specific organization. Some of these are related to those of the MS and HS; however, some were proposed by faculty members and TASIS families. Each year, students are able to experience different service work and their level of involvement deepens.

In the Middle School, service-learning helps students develop their leadership, organizational, and citizenship skills while they help the local community. The program helps students develop a sense of independence, a strong work ethic, and an awareness of the necessity and value of service. Middle School service-learning is integrated into the weekly schedule, and students are graded on their effort¹⁰.

The Opsahl Global Service Program is a service-learning program compulsory for all students in grade nine. During weekly meetings, that include discussions, guest speakers, films, simulations, readings, and other activities, students are exposed to a number of themes and topics that the Opsahl Global Service Program seeks to address: Education, Water/Sanitation, Poverty, Gender Equality, the

⁹ <https://www.tasis.ch/community/service>

¹⁰ <https://www.tasis.ch/community/service>

Environment, and Marginalized Populations. The program was envisioned by Jan Opsahl '68, who became the first international student at TASIS when he came from Norway in 1965¹¹. The pioneering program was launched in 2013 with major support from a most generous donation from Mr. Opsahl and his family to set up the Global Service Trust. This Trust, along with support from the TASIS Foundation, make this incredible, life-changing experience for our students possible.

A second school, Inter Community School Zurich also offers to their students service-learning opportunities. It has 4 SL projects: Sparkle Malawi, Shree Mangal Dvip School (SMD), SWS Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber and 2x Weihnachten. Sparkle Foundation sponsors numerous programmes where students and parents can help some of the most vulnerable children with access to healthcare, education and nutrition in Malawi, Africa. Shree Mangal Dvip (SMD) School serves the needs of children who come from some of the most vulnerable places—the northern villages of the Nepal Himalayas. SWS Sozialwerke Pfarrer Sieber is a foundation that strives for the greatest possible social reintegration of marginalized people. 2x Weihnachten is an online service that delivers packs of food and basic necessities for kids who are affected by poverty. In this School SL is called “Service Learning and Community Engagement”, putting additional emphasis on both - engagement & learning. Students are encouraged to understand that service to others is a responsibility that the ICS community fosters and to try to involve themselves in some form of service activity¹². They also document and reflect on their service in their service-learning booklets. ICS is part of the Round Square organisation, an internationally diverse network of 200 like-minded schools in 50 countries on six continents that connect and collaborate to offer world-class programmes and experiences, developing global competence, character and confidence in students¹³.

4.3. European Associations and Network related with Service-learning (selection)

European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE) - The Association was established in 2019 with the aim to promote S-L in European Higher Education and to foster scholarly activities related to it. This includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: disseminating information and knowledge on S-L; fostering and developing training activities and resources; establishing links among local, transnational and global networks; organizing meetings, exchanges, seminars, conferences, congresses and other events, alone and/or with groups pursuing the same objective; advocating S-L development in higher education institutions; contributing to the development of policy recommendations and initiatives; supporting individuals and institutions in developing S-L projects; conducting and encouraging research and scientific publications on S-L; raising funds and accepting legacies and donations to achieve the goals of the Association. EASLHE proposes the institutionalization of service-learning in European Higher Education institutions to promote civic engagement, contribute to the development of a fairer society and improve academic and social learning that favors the development of the students' competences. The General Assembly of the Association has

¹¹ <https://www.tasis.ch/community/service>

¹² <https://www.icsz.ch/well-being/service-learning>

¹³ <https://www.roundsquare.org/being-round-square/why/>

representatives from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, The Netherlands, and the United-Kingdom.

European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE) was created in January 2019 as a permanent space for cooperation and exchange among the members of the European network Europe Engage for mapping the use of, collecting data and evidences and promoting the use of this learning methodology as well as its institutionalising processes. The aim of the European Observatory is to enhance and disseminate the knowledge of service-learning in higher education in Europe, as an educational approach that enhances students' civic engagement, brings them closer to different social realities while allowing them to work in a real environment.

Campus Engage - Based within the Irish Universities Association, Campus Engage is devoted to supporting Irish higher education institutions in embedding, upgrading and promoting civic and community engagement among staff and students in teaching, learning and research. Campus Engage is overseen by a Steering Committee, facilitated by the IUA. Currently all seven Irish universities and the Technological University of Dublin are represented on the Steering Committee and participate in the following areas of activity: Community-Based Teaching and Learning: accredited experiential community-based learning/ community-based research (service-learning). Engaged Research and Innovation for Social Impact: research that aims to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, advanced with community partners rather than for them. Student Volunteering: supporting and promoting student volunteering through our online 'tech for good' system; Planning for Impact: building a national framework for measuring and evaluating the positive social impact of civic and community engagement in higher education.

German Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility – Hochschulnetzwerk - The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility in Germany is a network of higher education institutions which has set itself the goal (within the framework of the “university third mission”) of encouraging students, teachers and other academic staff to take on social responsibility, of providing them with support and of actively contributing to knowledge transfer from the university to civil society and vice versa. The network was founded ten years ago and today comprises more than 40 members, universities and applied sciences universities in Germany and Austria. The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility pursues its goals by connecting its members, especially at the level of higher education institution boards; through fostering professional and academic exchange; by supporting research on S-L, community engagement and campus-community partnerships; by conducting political lobbying activities; and through press and publicity work. The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility has also taken on leadership of the “Academy on Societal Responsibility” and as part of this programme it regularly offers training courses and workshops (also available as online courses) in the areas of S-L, citizenship education, social entrepreneurship and the development of cooperation between universities and civil society.

Portuguese Network of Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning - In Portugal there exists an informal network in service-learning. Within the recent years there has been constant work undertaken by a number of higher education institutions (HEI) within the Observatory for Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions (ORSIES). In 2021 ORSIES will promote more training in

S-L, hold meetings with European and international networks to create synergies, disseminate experiences and share best practices.

Spanish Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education ApS(U) - The Spanish Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education, ApS(U), was created in 2017 with the purpose of strengthening collaboration in and exchange of S-L experiences, disseminating educational and social projects based on the methodology, promoting S-L research, and supporting institutionalization of S-L in Spanish universities. ApS(U) is made up of university teachers, researchers and administrative staff. The Association is the leader of the EOSLHE project. Its members are all engaged with S-L and have experience, capacity and expertise in the topic. ApS(U) works closely with the European Association of S-L in Higher Education. Its activities include, but are not limited to: dissemination (conferences, seminars and other meetings of a scientific nature); research (preparation of reports and studies on the education system, educational policies and teaching methodologies related to S-L); methodology (development of programs, services and training materials in S-L especially aimed at the field of higher education); publications (creation, direction and participation in publications in any format that deal with S-L and educational or social matters related to the methodology); networks (participation in networks and creation of alliances with other entities, whether public or private, Spanish or foreign, that promote S-L); and institutionalization (development of or participation in S-L promotion activities among political and academic authorities, media and social agents).

Italian Network of Service-Learning and Community Engagement - The Italian Network includes representatives from twelve Italian universities, five foreign universities and four private training agencies. Its beginnings can be related to 2016 when the University of Bologna hosted the IARSCLE European Regional Research Conference, and launched the Italian Network of S-L and Community Engagement. With its launching, the pilot experience started, offering S-L to a small group of students on the master's degree in Clinical Psychology as part of the activities of the Community Psychology Lab.

Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network - The Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network is an informal network of individuals involved in S-L development and implementation at different levels of education in Central and Eastern Europe. The network was established in 2016 as a result of the support program set up by CLAYSS (Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario) in Central and Eastern Europe. Since April 2016 CLAYSS has supported partners in different countries in Central and Eastern Europe through training, facilitation, bibliography design tailored to the region and technical assistance to promote S-L on a regional level. Since these activities began, partners have been meeting online and on-site to promote exchange, mutual understanding and shared learning, understanding that cooperation among key actors provides support and strengthens S-L in the region. As part of this development the Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network has held Regional Service-Learning Weeks in different cities across the region. In 2020 the Network launched the First Regional Award for successful Service-Learning practice, aimed at pinpointing and acknowledging the work of educational institutions carrying out Service-Learning projects that promote active youth citizenship and integrate students' curricular learning with Service-Learning initiatives to the benefit of the community.

United Kingdom Community Engaged Learning/Service-Learning Network - The Service-Learning/ Community Engaged Learning (SL/CEL) Network in the United Kingdom (UK), although quite recent, from 2020, aims to become the national Community of Practice for HE practitioners who work in partnership with communities for positive social change and for enhancing student learning. The role of the SL/CEL Network in the UK is to: 1. Position the network as the national Community of Practice for practitioners engaged in Service-Learning/Community Engaged Learning (SL/CEL) in the United Kingdom (UK); 2. Develop initiatives that increase the identity, visibility and value of SL/CEL in the UK; 3. Document the landscape of SL/CEL in the UK to create a connected Community of Practice; 4. Support practitioners to reflect or respond to the UK policy landscape; 5. Develop a scholarly, collegiate community open to collaboration on research and publications; 6. Facilitate regular conferences, forums and meetings to share knowledge and best practice; 7. Encourage and support the co-creation of work with the community in all SL/CEL practice; 8. Be a policy voice for SL/CEL in a changing UK Higher Education environment. This Network is open to every HE Practitioner who wishes to develop their SL/CEL practice, share their own learning and aspire to build university-community relations based on mutual benefit. Membership is open to HE professionals focused on creating social impact such as: Academics, Community Engagement practitioners, Public Engagement practitioners, Student volunteering practitioners, Impact Managers, Researchers, reaching Fellows, and any other HE practitioner interested in SL/CEL.

Flemish network for Service-Learning in higher education - The joint organization of the second European conference of service-learning in higher education in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2019, brought together an organizational team composed of representatives of more than 13 Flemish educational institutions, and it fostered the desire of the founding institutions to form a Flemish network for service-learning in higher education. The central aim of the network is to promote service-learning in higher education in Flanders and to support scientific activities related to this subject. The network aims to achieve these core goals through the following strategic activities: (I) Fostering the visibility and recognition of service-learning as a labour-intensive teaching method, (II) The creation of a learning community, and (III) Research support for quality improvement.

French Association for Student Engagement - The U7+ Alliance - The French legal framework and, consequently, the country's Higher Education institutions (HEI) put forward "student engagement" rather than "service-learning". The U7+ Alliance is an example of a quite new association that includes the promotion of student engagement among its main strategic axes. Created in 2019, the U7+ Alliance is an international alliance of world-class university Presidents that want to mirror the G7 by playing a role in the multilateral agenda. The alliance calls upon partner universities to take stock of their unique civic and social responsibility as global actors by taking concrete action for a local, regional, and global impact.

Swiss Service-Learning Centre - The Swiss Service-Learning Centre is supported by the Migros Culture Percentage, which is a voluntary commitment of Migros, anchored in its statutes and based on its responsibility to society. It is committed to providing the population with broad access to culture and education, enabling it to engage with society and empowering people to participate in social, economic and cultural changes. The pillars are culture, society, education, leisure and business. Service X Learning offers: Support for teachers and students in their projects; Tools for planning; elaboration and

implementation of projects, promotion of collaboration with execution partners, presentation of volunteer projects carried out by students in the curriculum.

5. Academics' & Education Professionals Perspective(s) on SL: SLUSIK small - scale study

Aiming to analyse academics' perspective on service-learning in general while targeting their own experience and existing service-learning practices - that could greatly contribute to our better understanding of adapting the existing models typical for the higher education and creating new ones to be tested for inclusion into high schools - we conducted a SLUSIK small scale research and analysis within and outside of the SLUSIK consortium countries. Altogether seventeen (17) female academics participated, coming from different disciplinary areas, as well as different countries and higher education systems - Croatia, Slovakia, Austria, Spain, Ireland. The span of their age ranges from 33 to 46 years of age, while the span of their working experience within the HE sector ranges from 8 till 21 years of working practice. And last, but not the least, as for their experience in integrating service-learning in their teaching, 3 of them have less than 4 years of practice, while the majority has more than 5, some even 10 and 15 years of practice.

Table XY. Academics participating in a SLUSIK small-scale study - summary of key attributes

	→	17 university teachers, all female
	→	Different (public) universities in Croatia, Slovakia, Austria, Spain, Ireland
SLUSIK small-scale study participants - academics	→	Different disciplinary areas
	→	From 33 to 46 of age
	→	Working in HE sector - from 8 till 21 years
	→	SL integration experience – 3 participants less than 4 years, 14 from 5 till 15 years

Academics were invited to participate in this research in two different ways, following different methodological decisions for conducting the study. Academics from Croatia that were/are not part of the SLUSIK project/consortium, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted (audio taped, transcribed and analysed separately using Dedoose software for qualitative data analysis), while the participants coming from the SLUSIK project/consortium were invited to fill in the online questionnaire. The interview protocol and the online questionnaire were in tune as considering the questions. While several question were placed as general (engagement in HE & teaching, engagement in service-learning and type of their service-learning experience), others were framed to investigate the particular national context within the SLUSIK countries: interest in service-learning by colleagues in academia, types of service-learning taking place in different countries, institutional support, and challenges and attitudes toward the obligation of students' engagement in service-learning projects. Additional research resource at this point was the small-scale study and the analysis done by the Austrian partners from the SLUSIK

project who managed to collect data from 21 education professionals including teachers working at primary and secondary level schools, as well as education professionals from tertiary level teaching and NGO's.

This part of the state-of-the-art report is therefore divided in two parts, presenting in the first one the results from the study related with (female) academics coming from different public universities, and then the Austrian part of the analysis, as the later one includes perspectives of various stakeholders, but still all education professionals coming from different arenas (schools, higher education institutions and non-for-profit organisations).

5.1. Academics' Perspective(s) on Service-learning: SLUSIK small scale research

Although without any intention for this part of the research to become a female narrative on service-learning in higher education, this particular homogeneity issue of the research participants needs to be taken into account, as all of the 17 study participants ended up being female. Following thematic analysis done, this part focuses on seven emerging themes (see below), and each one is described using the *in vivo* codes as well, thus bringing the participants voices into the analysis.

Academics' Perspective(s) on Service-learning - seven areas of analysis and emerging themes:

- (I) Participants' perception on key service-learning characteristics,
- (II) Participants' motivational reasons to engage in service-learning projects/course and the evolution of change in motivation,
- (III) Participants' perspective on benefits of service-learning for universities,
- (IV) Participants' perspective on benefits of service-learning for students and their social and civic competencies
- (V) Participants' perspective on key factors for success in service-learning implementation
- (VI) Challenges during the service-learning implementation, and
- (VII) Participants' perspectives on elements and experiences from service-learning implementation in HEIs, which can be transferred to secondary schools

5.2 Participants' perception on key service-learning characteristics

Participants perceived service-learning as an "*innovative didactic methodology*", "*collaborative methodology*", "*engaged learning*", "*active and collaborative learning*", "*accredited learning*", "*pre-thought and organized experience of students*", and "*teaching and learning connected with reality and committed to it*". These selected notions point to a variation of academics' perspectives as there are nuances in how they perceive service-learning. Some of them are (more) focused on the notion of service-learning being a certain kind of methodology (innovative, didactic, and collaborative); some participants explicitly focus on the notion of learning, again with nuances included (engaged, active, accredited learning); some have students as salient base, while some made immediate relation between teaching and learning and (social/societal) reality. Such nuances were not perceived as a novelty, nor a

challenge, knowing that there is a great cacophony in the literature following plenty of service-learning definitions as well.

Analysing all those nuances in academics' perspectives of service-learning yielded **five crucial characteristics of service-learning:**

- (I) responsiveness to the authentic needs of the community,
- (II) students' engagement,
- (III) connection between service and learning,
- (IV) reflection, and
- (V) involvement of different stakeholders & mutual benefits.

(I) Responsiveness to the authentic needs of the community

There is a consensus among study participants that service-learning needs to be portrayed as well as planned and organised as a service that directly responds to the recognised authentic needs of their (local) community. In their perspectives participants frequently use the phrase "*with community*", as illustrated by the excerpts of some of the participants - "*cooperation of students with members of the community*" or "*students are working with, rather than 'doing to' a community partner on a community-identified needs*", or "*partnerships that act on local societal challenges*".

Beside the importance of community needs as such, participants highly value community partners and describe them as partners, experts, and supporters in identifying various community needs and local societal challenges, while guiding students in their assignments - "*community partners are subject experts who guide our students*". The engagement of different stakeholders in service-learning classes/project will be analysed more in depth as part of the final (fifth) characteristics, however it is important to note here that academics perceive partnerships with civil society organisations (CSOs) as the crucial element of both identifying local societal challenges and acting upon those recognised needs, as illustrated by one of the participants - "*for service-learning it is crucial to make partnerships with civic and civil society organisations, on self-identified needs, and acting on local societal challenges*".

(II) Students' engagement

Students' active involvement in service-learning classes/projects is another important characteristic referred to by academics. Participants are unanimous in seeing students as true partners and project leaders, thus giving them an important role in every single phase of planning, organising, conducting, and evaluating the service-learning project itself, as illustrated in following excerpts by some of the participants - "*students should be perceived as project leaders in service-learning projects*", or "*students must be involved in the planning, preparation, and evaluation of the service-learning activity itself*."

While acknowledging the importance of the whole experience, participants portray such students' participation in service-learning projects as a learning journey that is sometimes even more important than the activities and their outcomes *per se*, as one of the participants stated out - "*the student's journey through the service-learning process is as important, if not even more important, than the outcome itself*".

(III) The connection between service and learning

Participants are quite homogeneous in their perspective on having both components - service and learning - being really connected and integrated as such. Participants therefore refer to the importance of service-learning projects being either linked with the curriculum, or fully integrated in one - *“service-learning programmes need to be linked to the curriculum”*, or *“service-learning is integrated in the academic curriculum”*.

Beside the clearly stated connection with the academic curriculum, participants highly value the integration of service-learning projects and particular assignments into the academic research context as well, thus pointing to the importance of the holistic approach, as one participant stated out - *“service-learning projects need to be integrated both into the academic curriculum and the research context”*.

(IV) Reflection

Reflection in service-learning projects is highly valued by the study participants as well, and is seen as a central force in designing the course, as well as in the context of the fulfillment of curricular objectives. Participants have quite a holistic perspective on the reflection element, pointing primarily to its importance in the context of encouraging students to think critically, as referred to by one of the participants - *“reflection encourages critical thinking”*.

Participants recognize the wealth of reflection possibilities, referring to their experience of using not only various methods, but placing the reflection in different points in time, thus acknowledging the importance of reflection before, during, and after the service-learning project, as illustrated in this excerpt - *“reflection takes place before, during and after engagement with partners, and uses multiple methods”*.

(V) Involvement of different stakeholders & mutual benefits

Participants recognize various relevant actors that have their important roles within different kinds of service-learning projects - students, faculty members, community partners, schools, and the broader educational community. In addition, they refer to the importance of acknowledging mutual benefits that need to shape service-learning projects in order for them to actually be realised with, and not only on and/or for the community.

When referring to the benefits for students, participants are more focused on students' soft and/or transversal competencies, as well on raising their awareness about the societal reality they live in, as illustrated by following excerpts - *“this methodology allows students to improve/gain transversal/soft skills”*, or *“service-learning helps students in increasing heir awareness about social or community needs/problems.”*

Some of the participants portray service-learning as a great platform for social inclusion of young people that contributes to the social coherence - *“service-learning helps to improve the social inclusion*

of the youth, which helps to achieve social coherence in the society”. For some, service-learning stands for a process that cultivates engaged citizens, as students need to obtain certain levels of their own social responsibility when engaging in service-learning projects, as one of the participants pointed out - *“cultivating students as engaged citizens taking social responsibility is another important characteristic of SL”.*

Besides recognising the benefits for students, participants referred to service-learning being a great platform for improving various elements of teaching competence as well, thus empowering them in their own profession, as illustrated in following excerpt - *“service-learning improves the teaching competencies of teachers and offers flexibility in terms of curriculum adaptations by empowering teachers”.*

And last, but certainly not the least, some of the participants acknowledge the importance of the whole-approach in the context of service-learning actually being very powerful platform for re-considering own roles in the society, as well as for community and societal challenges awareness, as best illustrated by one of the participants excerpt - *“in the best case scenario, service-learning helps people to look beyond the framework of their own world of experience, to strengthen empathy, to experience the world in its complexity, to critically question their own role in society and to experience themselves as having an impact”.*

5.2.1 Participants’ motivational reasons to engage in service-learning projects/course and the evolution of change in motivation

The analysis of motivational reasons that “pushed” academics into integrating service-learning in their everyday teaching practice points to different stimuli in two main categories: **(I) personal motives** associated with the intrinsic motivation and value system; previous experience associated with volunteering; significant others (influence of other professors who they admire and look upon as role models); study abroad/international, and study visits or working in NGO sector, and **(II) service-learning effects acknowledged in both research/literature and personal experience**, connected mostly with recognized benefits for academics and higher education teaching, students and for the local community as well.

(I) Personal motives to engage in service-learning projects

For some of the participants previous volunteering experience associated with NGOs in their local communities was a stimulating factor for engaging in creating service-learning courses/projects, as they described service-learning as *“a way to address two objectives with one shot, that is, **integrate learning and social commitment.**”*

Reflecting upon their own motivation for introducing service-learning in their courses, some of the participants put an accent to their own mindset and value system that highly relates with the essence of service-learning and all the benefits it offers, as illustrated - *“in a way I was motivated by my own worldview and value system as I believe strongly that learning through cross-sectoral cooperation is important and that it is important to step out of one's own zone of safety and comfort into action and*

help others."

For some, motivation for introducing service-learning in their own courses was the **connection of learning with real life**, *"which translates into genuine connections between academic learning and real-world environments."* Some of the participants were searching for *"opportunities for young people to get exposure to real-world activities"* because they believe that future professionals should also be prepared through practical experiences. In a similar way, some of the participants describe their motivation more in relation with what service-learning as a particular methodology offers to students, as they describe it as an *"experiential learning that is a great motivator for the students"*.

For some of the participants studying or working abroad was recognized as a motivational factor - *"a large part of us have become positively infected and introduced to the service-learning model while staying at foreign universities, mostly in the USA."*

(II) Service-learning effects acknowledged in both research/literature and personal experience

Interestingly, when reflecting upon their motivation for integrating, and even more, for continuing having service-learning as part of their courses, most of the participants make connections with benefits that have been recognised within the relevant literature and those that represent part of their own personal and professional experience with service-learning.

Following, a larger part of academics' motivation is connected with various **benefits of service-learning for students**. For some of the participants it is about developing and/or improving certain transversal skills - *"service-learning is a methodology that helps students develop practical foundational skills like communication, planning, and empathy"* or *"service-learning assists students in developing key competencies for the 21st century"*. For some participants service-learning is mostly connected with offering students relevant experience anchored in real-life examples of challenges that non-for-profit organisations usually deal with - *"service-learning gives students concrete examples from practice to better understand the matter and get some experience"*. Some participants place their motivation in a more broader context of such experiential learning being a supportive element for students in a process of learning how to cope with fast-changing and complex world we're living in - *"engaged learning helps young people to develop skills to navigate their way in a fast-changing, complex and increasingly uncertain world"*. Beside being related to students in particular, for some participants initial motivation is tuned with their desire to assist and help organisations in their community, while at the same time offering students great opportunities to learn, as illustrated by one participant - *"we work closely with the sector, especially the non-for-profit sector, and we are aware of what problems that bother them, so we had a desire to help these organisations while giving students first-hand experience"*.

Another group of motivational factors was connected with the academics' willingness to contribute to the community and society in general and service-learning was seen as the best way to do it - *"service-learning was presented as the most appropriate pedagogical and didactic option if a teacher is convinced that a better, fairer, and more caring world is necessary"*. For some it has stronger ties with certain values underpinning our society, as explained by one of the participants - *"service-learning allows*

through creating connections between community and students to cultivate a more democratic and pluralistic society”.

As for the **participants’ ‘evolution’ and change of motivation over time**, their decision to introduce service-learning in their courses was mainly connected with the “*enthusiastic attempt*”, challenge of something new, unknown, and uncharted in their respective national HE system, as well as with their wish to experiment with teaching and try something new - “*the desire to work differently and experience something new*”, or “*the desire to test different innovative teaching methods and techniques*”.

Motivation for keeping service-learning integrated in their courses overtime has been in relation to various factors - (I) those connected to students, (II) those personal and more in tune with their own teaching, and (III) those related to community.

For a lot of participants the first service-learning experience changed everything as students’ positive feedback gave them a certain kind of ‘confirmation’. It was therefore students’ great experience that pushed them further to continue with such organised courses, as one of the participants explained - “*for me, it was actually the first students’ feedback that made significant change; after my first attempt to introduce the service-learning I was reading their diaries, and they were so very satisfied*”. Positive impact on students was often mentioned by the participants as a factor that not only kept their motivation to stay on the service-learning ‘track’, but that shaped it and made it stronger over time, as one of the participants explained - “*my motivation is only getting stronger because we see that there is a more lasting impact on students, given that many students continue to volunteer after completing the service-learning courses*”.

For some of the participants the continuous motivation was connected mainly with their personal maturity in teaching “*Today, so to speak, it is more of a mature approach where I know what I’m getting into, I know I want to keep doing it, and I know I can implement it successfully*”. Integrating service-learning within their courses profoundly influenced some of the participants, and it is the best captured in one of the participant’s statement - “*over time you realize that service-learning works and that it makes sense and logic and everything else in teaching that had no relation to service-learning has stopped making sense for me*”.

And last, but certainly not the least, for some of the participants the continuous motivation for keeping the service-learning a crucial part of their courses was in relation to the positive impact it has on the community, as one of the participants noted - “*for me it is mostly about resolved community partner issues which was so difficult at the beginning, but now I already have a list of partners, and I know exactly what to expect out of each collaboration.*”

To sum it all up, participants’ motivation didn’t decrease at any point, sometimes it got even higher over time, and their experiences with service-learning implementation confirm that “*service-learning is the right way.*”

5.2.2 Participants' perspective on benefits of service-learning for universities

Study participants perceive different benefits of having service-learning anchored in higher education teaching. Data analysis points to different frameworks (internal and external) and levels of benefits as well - from those institutional and mission related, those oriented towards improving teaching and students' competences, to those more long-term and related to universities connections with their local communities.

For some participants this kind of engaged teaching and learning is related to the **fulfillment of the universities third mission** and thus institutional intentions to address societal needs and their contribution to solving identified problems in the community. As one of the participants highlighted - *"The objectives of the universities are to promote knowledge, research, and transfer of that knowledge into solutions for society's needs and/or problems"*. Following the idea of the universities third mission, some of the participants discuss the importance of **developing long-term university-community partnerships**. Such partnerships are seen as a great platform for match-making of theory, research and practice - *"Community partners are interested in further cooperation, and this helps for connecting research and practice and also for setting up partnerships between the university and community"*. As stated by the study participants, these kinds of long-term partnerships are vital for any kind of collaboration to be able to actually constructively **contribute to the sustainable community development**, as one participant illustrated - *"Universities need to develop a long-term partnership with the rest of the social stakeholders to accomplish their core objectives fully. Therefore, when the university engages in cultural and institutional practice, the individual and social well-being become true and sustainable."* Another institutionally related benefit recognised by the study participants is connected with service-learning actually **contributing to and enhancing universities' reputation**, not only in local communities, but on the national and international scale as well.

In addition, study participants recognised benefits that contribute to students as they are important stakeholders within the academic community. Those benefits are focused on **developing students' competences** and **expanding their employment opportunities**. Contributing to students' further improvement of their competences is strongly connected with their (future) role in the society, as illustrated by one participant - *"Service-learning develops a so-called open mindset, which is necessary to deal with complex educational and societal problems"*. Following, some of the participants highlight the importance of service-learning being a great platform for connecting theory and practice, that is and will be beneficial for students knowing that they were immersed in a context of experiential learning - *"Competences that students gain are transferable to society. Since students "learn by doing" in real societal settings, they will not have to worry later about bridging the gap between theory and practice."* Additional, quite important benefit, participants relate to service-learning experience contributing to students' future employment opportunities. Being aware of many difficulties that students face upon their graduation and challenges in finding a job without any prior working experience, study participants highlight the importance of engaging students in service-learning projects as they can actually serve as a real working experience, empowering students to transfer competencies gained.

5.2.3 Participants' perspective on benefits of service-learning for students and their social and civic competencies

While some of the benefits related to students were already acknowledged in the previous part - integral to benefits for universities - participants' perspective on benefits of students' engagement in service-learning projects is multifaceted and therefore extracted as a separate analytical unit.

For study participants service-learning is seen as a great impetus for developing youth civic and social responsibility, much needed for the democracy - *"I see service-learning as a powerful tool and strategy to facilitate the access to high-quality learning experiences that leads toward a greater sense of civic and democratic responsibility for those engaged"*. Not only do they perceive it as a strategy that allows the acquisition of (new) knowledge and skill, but in some cases as a volunteering activity that translates into students' higher consciousness and their engagement in and with different actors in local communities. Service-learning, as study participants stated, promotes experiential learning through active participation in the community and through intentionally planned and structured projects, which allows for students to engage with the beneficiaries of the service performed. Such a platform assists students in recognizing the needs and the reality in which their co-citizens live, and in carrying out activities with a pedagogical intention oriented to students' training and education in civic values. Participants shared some of their own experience and reflection in researching, analysing, and realising how profoundly service-learning affected their students on both personal and professional level, and how it facilitated their own change and transformation, as illustrated by the following excerpts from the interviews:

"The transformation occurs within the individual themselves, a change in the way of thinking or mindset, so difficult to measure in traditional assessment criteria. Students have told me that it's fundamentally changed their thinking about what they might do in future, experiencing the value of skills that are acquired non-formally, which often opens up opportunities they may not have seen before. Understanding that you can use your digital skills in an NGO for instance, instead of immediately assuming that it must be an IT company. Or that language skills beyond English are an absolutely critical asset to Public Health Nurses – broadens thinking about how a student may see themselves having a place in the community."

"We did some research and you can see that students develop not only particular knowledge and skills, but especially attitudes. Not everyone becomes engaged, but they gain experience and they certainly know that they can also learn things by making practical use of what they are learning now at the university."

In addition, participants identified three dominant phases in students' perspective of experiencing service-learning: (I) initial fear, (II) adapting to the situation, and (III) high satisfaction at the end. Initial fear was connected with fear related to the unknown, to different competences needed from students (e.g. research skills, presentational skills), from entering the community, and from not having their own social capital, so participants shared some of the initial comments from students and their evaluations - *"OMG, how will I do it"; "I can't do it, it's too much work"*. As part of the middle phase of the

service-learning project, students start adapting to the situation, as illustrated by study participants - *“They really appreciate such new experiences and are extremely open when engaging in different activities over the time of the course implementation”*, or *“As the semester progresses and as they see more and more positive results, they become more and more satisfied with themselves and the community”*. The ‘grand finale’ at the end of the service-learning project is usually portrayed with students’ being highly satisfied with the whole experience, and the results they have been able to achieve, as one participants points to - *“After nagging at the beginning and trying to find their way over the timeline of the service-learning course, at the end they are extremely proud of themselves and everything they have accomplished”*.

5.2.4 Participants’ perspective on key factors for success in service-learning implementation

Data analysis on participants’ perspectives related to the critical factors for successful service-learning integration in higher education teaching yielded both internal and external factors that were grouped in following four themes - (I) institutional environment, (II) professors and students, (III) community partners, and (IV) service-learning methodology.

As part of the **institutional environment** participants recognised the importance of university management support and recognition for service-learning methodology, following adequate resources and something more conceptual - university “openness” towards collaborating with various actors in the community, and towards innovations in higher education teaching.

Successful service-learning implementation is also strongly influenced by both **university professors** and their continuous commitment to such courses/projects, and by motivation of **students**. Several participants also mentioned a **motivated and ambitious team of professors** and the group leader as a crucial factor, which is particularly the case at those universities where such a group act as a pioneering one, introducing service-learning courses for the first time. When focusing more on their own role being one of the key ‘ingredient’ in pursuing successful service-learning projects, participants recognised **five categories of their competences** as those key ones that facilitate the process of successful service-learning integration: **(I) civic competence** - *“your own proactivity, that is, providing your own example that you are an active citizen yourself”*, **(II) organizational competence** - *“coordination and facilitation of the whole process”*, **(III) leadership competence** - *“time and people management”*, **(IV) collaborative competence** - *“you have to be always ready for new experiences and cooperation because that’s the only way the whole process can work”*, and **(V) digital competence** - *“a lot is done online through the distance learning system, and you have to catch up with the new and trendy technology”*.

Another acknowledged key factor of successful service-learning integration into higher education teaching is related to **collaboration with partners in the community** that calls for **shared responsibility and ownership**, as illustrated by one of the participants - *“cooperation and co-responsibility of different stakeholders in service-learning projects is crucial for succeeding in all activities planned”*. Participants highly value such a service-learning platform where the entire process is

seen as a “*bottom-up process*” in which “*everyone should be included in the decision-making process, planning, implementation, and assessment*”.

From the service-learning methodology point, participants acknowledge various elements as crucial ones, pointing actually to the **importance of a whole-approach** in planning, delivering and evaluating service-learning projects. Participants were quite unanimous in discussing the importance of well planned and executed needs assessment, setting up the expectations for all actors engaged, coordinating support and managing relationships in all of their directions (between professors and community partners, students and community partners, students and professors, and between students themselves), and creating reflection assignments in a way to be both intellectually and emotionally challenging.

5.2.5 Challenges during the service-learning implementation

Reflecting upon challenges they have encountered during delivering service-learning courses/projects, study participants reveal **lack of capacity, resources, support, recognition, flexibility, commitment, cooperation, motivation, and knowledge** associated with service-learning methodology. This "lack of" as a challenge was recognised in relation to all stakeholders involved - institution, university professors, students and community partners.

Participants see a **lack of capacity** connected with the general “*task and work overload*” of university professors and students. Lack of capacity was also identified on the side of community partners, as illustrated in the following excerpt - “*community partners lacking the capacity to engage with the students through the whole process and not understanding that the outcomes can't necessarily be controlled*”. **Lack of resources** was dominantly associated with those financial resources needed to support the ‘smooth’ transition of service-learning projects, but with the elements of time and qualified teaching, research and mentoring staff as well. As one of the participants explained - “*many times the resources allocated are clearly insufficient and therefore monitoring and particularly evaluation activities are often compromised or even sacrificed from the initial plan, if they were even included in the project in the first place*”. **Lack of support** was perceived as a challenge not only from the university as an institution but also from other colleagues, professors, and collaborators in the community. The lack of support is also connected with the **lack of knowledge** of other professors who “*think service-learning is just playing around with students, they don't perceive new trends in young people's learning, and they think that just a traditional lecture is the right one*”. Lack of knowledge was also connected with the students, in the context of them still not being familiar with this kind of teaching and learning. **Lack of flexibility and commitment** is associated mainly with the institutional university environment, which is why sometimes it is, as stated by our participants, “*very difficult to fully develop a service-learning project*”, or “*continuously trying to integrate service-learning model within still traditional university system with all of its constraints, eventually exhausts professors so service-learning projects never really flourish*”. These challenges are particularly related to the division of teaching into semesters, lack of commitment to accommodate the structural and functional changes that some service-learning projects require, like schedules, insurance, credit compensation for professors and students, a collaboration agreement with other institutions, etc. Lack of commitment was also recognised in the context of

university-community partnership **lacking collaboration** between these entities, as explained by some of the participants - *“there is a lack of commitment needed from the university to provide ongoing support for community partners”, and “insufficient or weak cooperation of networks or partnerships between educational institutions and social entities that provide services to the community”*.

The last category of challenges was connected with the **lack of motivation of students**, and best illustrated by the following excerpt - *“Service-learning requires motivation and commitment. Students should be motivated to bring the projects to an end. During the process, there can be moments where students lose their interests. However, seeing concrete benefits of service-learning and the impact they achieve through the process and over time, can motivate them all. The point is to make the success visible”*.

5.2.6 Participants’ perspectives on elements and experiences from service-learning implementation in HEIs, which can be transferred to secondary schools

Study participants share the idea that service-learning methodology is transferable from higher education institutions to those of previous schooling, e.g. secondary schools. Leaning on their own experiences gained from integrating service-learning in their courses, they extracted several elements/characteristics that not only can be transferred to secondary schools, but some of them are seen as necessary to learn about from an early age.

The first of such characteristics is related to **learning how to develop one's own social and civic competences**. Study participants are quite unanimous in sharing the attitude that acquiring social and civic competences is very relevant for the 21st century context, and that service-learning platforms can be planned and organised in a way to acknowledge the capacity and potentials of various youth cohorts. Some of their insights are well illustrated by the following excerpts:

“Service-learning strategy can be transferred to secondary schools mainly due to the need to develop key competencies for the 21st century, especially the development of civic engagement and critical thinking”.

“Thanks to service-learning projects, students can learn self-reflection and they can recognize their predispositions, their own prejudices or tendencies at an earlier age as well”.

The second of such characteristics is related to service-learning projects offering engagement in the real world setting while providing an opportunity for students/pupils not only to get to know their own community better, but their own interests and possible future educational and professional pathways, as illustrated by one of the study participants - *“They can come to know the community needs and the service offered before they choose a career pathway”*.

The third of such characteristics is related to **reflection**, as one of the core service-learning

elements. As service-learning requires reflection about the social meaning of the service, the evaluation of the ‘lessons learned’, as well as of the personal and emotional impact, and the results that have been obtained, it offers to young people quite complex platform that can empower their own learning processes, as illustrated by one of the participants - *“The introduction of reflection practices would be beneficial throughout their education and careers”*.

The fourth of such characteristics is related to **building partnerships and collaborative projects** with various actors in the community. Participants share the idea that engaging young people in such complex collaborative networks and projects, where they can actually experience the importance of participation and joint efforts in addressing certain societal issues, can offer a platform for valuable lessons on tolerance, inclusion, and empathy, as explained by one of the participants - *“The relationship with community partners and working in small groups/project teams within appropriate frameworks will assist them in understanding the importance of participation and in building their empathy for others and sense of identity for self”*.

The fifth such characteristic leans to the previous one, and is related to the implications of having **different stakeholders engaged** within a joint service-learning project. As it is the case in higher education setting, participants share the idea that organising service-learning projects in secondary schools would require a network of different actors, relevant for the societal issues/needs that are in the focus of service-learning projects. As there needs to be a joint effort and commitment in selecting, designing, implementing and evaluating the service project, participants have consensus on the importance for the school environment to offer young people such experiential platform where they can “exercise” and experience collaboration in a real-life setting, but still within a safe environment of their own educational institution.

The sixth such characteristic is related to the **recognition of service-learning projects**, energy and commitment invested, particularly in relation to the management support in celebrating results achieved and success of such a school project. As pointed out by one of the participants, supporting and promoting success can only lead to further motivation of those engaged - *“it is very important for the schools to promote success because it is a strong motivation factor for other people to join”*.

5.3. Education Professionals’ Perspective(s) on Service-learning: SLUSIK small scale study

The data for this particular small-scale study were collected only in Austria, and from 21 education professionals including teachers working at primary or secondary level schools as well as education professionals from tertiary level teaching and those working in NGOs. A majority of the participants have more than 10 years of experience in teaching, while more than 88% of them have at least 3 years of experience as an education professional.

1. For how many years have you been engaged in teaching or educational services? (school, NGO, tertiary)

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0-2	9.52% 2
3-6	19.05% 4
7-10	9.52% 2
More than 10	61.90% 13
TOTAL	21

2. For how many years have you been engaged in Service Learning as a teacher/ an education professional?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 1	14.29% 3
1-4	52.38% 11
5-6	14.29% 3
More than 6	19.05% 4
TOTAL	21

The majority of the participants have been engaged in service-learning between one and four years, and at different types of education institutions. However, the larger proportion of participants (76,19%) engaged in service-learning are coming from higher education institutions, while less than 20% of them are coming from upper secondary and equally from non-school based educational institutions.

3. At which school level did you engage in Service Learning as a teacher/ an education professional? You can choose more than one option.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Primary	9.52% 2
Lower Secondary	9.52% 2
Upper Secondary	19.05% 4
Tertiary (University, FH, PH etc.)	76.19% 16
Non-school education institution	19.05% 4
Other (please specify)	Responses 4.76% 1
Total Respondents: 21	

Exactly half of the participants (50%) teach one or more courses with integrated service-learning methodology. A bit less, 45% of them have service-learning experiences in their professional past, while one-third of participants were engaged in extracurricular or volunteer programs on service-learning.

4. What experience do you have with Service-Learning (SL)? Please check all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I currently teach one or more classes that involve SL	50.00% 10
I have taught SL class(es) in the past	45.00% 9
I have participated in SL project in an extracurricular/volunteer program	30.00% 6
I have very little experience with SL	5.00% 1
Other (please specify)	Responses 5.00% 1
Total Respondents: 20	

The issue of interest among educational professionals in Austria reveals interesting ‘predictions’, as none of the participants think there is no interest among their colleagues. More than one-third of the participants rate their colleagues may be (38,10%) or are very likely to be interested (38,10%) in integrating service-learning, while 23,81% of the participants rate a definite interest.

5. How would you rate the interest level in Service Learning among teachers, education professionals, your colleagues in Austria?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Definitely interested	23.81% 5
Very likely to be interested	38.10% 8
Maybe will be interested	38.10% 8
Not likely to be interested	0.00% 0
Absolutely not interested	0.00% 0
I do not know	0.00% 0
TOTAL	21

Service-learning takes place at various levels of schools, at the tertiary level as well as on a volunteer basis through NGOs and other educational provisions. The most common engagement for service-learning is tutoring. Tutoring other students, adults or the elderly is an engagement that takes place very often in the frame of service - learning, followed by a specific engagement in conducting art/music/dance classes for the youth and the local community. Engagement in the local community is another common way of service-learning in Austria. Planning and putting on public forums on the topics of interest in the community and restoring the ecosystem in preserve areas for public use are the other two types of service-learning that are often. Helping in a homeless shelter or engaging in teaching and tutoring activities especially for the students who are at risk, such as refugee students, are other types of activities within service-learning projects.

6. Based on your knowledge, which types of Service Learning take place in Austria?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Tutoring other students, adults or elderly	90.48%	19
▼ Conducting art/music/dance lessons for youth/local community	61.90%	13
▼ Helping in a homeless shelter	19.05%	4
▼ Planning and putting on public forums on topics of interest in the community	47.62%	10
▼ Conducting public information campaigns on topics of interest or local needs	52.38%	11
▼ Working with hospice patients	0.00%	0
▼ Restoring historic structures or building low-income housing	4.76%	1
▼ Restoring ecosystems in preserve areas for public use	42.86%	9
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 19.05%	4
Total Respondents: 21		

Although all participants have experience with service-learning and service-learning takes place in a variety of activities, teachers and education professionals do not think that teachers and education professionals in Austria are well informed about service-learning. In addition, participants believe that educational professionals are not aware of what services are provided by the institutions to improve service-learning and where to find information about service-learning. The majority of the participants (85%) agrees that there is not enough institutional support for service-learning in Austria.

7. Would you agree with the sentences below? Please check all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ There is sufficient institutional support for Service Learning (SL) efforts in Austria	0.00%	0
▼ There is not sufficient institutional support for SL efforts in Austria	85.00%	17
▼ Teachers and education professionals in Austria are aware of the services provided by the institutions to improve SL	5.00%	1
▼ Teachers and education professionals in Austria do not know well enough where to find help on SL	90.00%	18
Total Respondents: 20		

Participants from all school levels think that service-learning should be integrated in the curriculum, although to a different extent. According to the study participants, the majority believes that participating in a service-learning project should be a graduation requirement for students participating in teacher training (85%), followed by compulsory education and tertiary level other than teacher training programs.

8. Please complete the sentence. You can select more than one option.

“Every student should have to do a Service Learning project in order to graduate from”

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Primary school (Age 10)	30.00%	6
▼ Compulsory education (Age 15)	65.00%	13
▼ Upper secondary (Age 18)	65.00%	13
▼ Tertiary level (University, FH, PH, Akademie)	60.00%	12
▼ Teacher training (University, PH, Bakip, BAfEB/ BAfEB Kolleg)	85.00%	17
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 20		

There are several challenges that are relevant to service-learning implementation in Austria. The most common challenge is that there is no explicit focus on service-learning in the school curriculum. On the other hand, the missing service-learning component in the teacher education curriculum is another big hurdle. It is believed that there are not enough efforts to train teachers for service-learning either in pre-service teacher education or in-service teacher education. The lack of support systems to provide teachers and education professionals with information on service-learning is another challenge in Austria. The inflexibility of the school curriculum is another obstacle for the teachers who want to include service-learning in their teaching but are prevented by the fixed curriculum components that offer no flexibility for adjustments. The lack of support from school administration in terms of implementing service-learning in school is an important factor that challenges teachers and education professionals. Not enough explicit space for conceptual foundations and critical analysis of underlying concepts to develop these in both, teacher education and school curriculum is also another obstacle in the system.

9. Which challenges do you think are relevant for implementing Service-Learning (SL) in Austria? Please check all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Not enough support system for teachers and education professionals on how to implement SL	61.90%	13
▼ Not enough explicit focus on SL in the school curriculum	85.71%	18
▼ Not enough efforts in teacher education to train teachers for SL	71.43%	15
▼ Not enough in-service training (Fortbildung) for teachers about SL	80.95%	17
▼ Not enough flexibility within the school curriculum to implement SL projects	57.14%	12
▼ Not enough interest of teachers and education professionals in SL	19.05%	4
▼ Not enough interest of students to take part in SL projects	9.52%	2
▼ Not enough support from school direction to implement SL projects	42.86%	9
▼ Not enough parental support to implement SL projects	4.76%	1
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 4.76%	1
Total Respondents: 21		

6. High School Teachers' Perspective(s) on Service-learning: SLUSIK small - scale study

Another small-scale study done within the SLUSIK project, aiming to additionally inform the process of scaling up and testing the model of service-learning in high schools, was done with a particular group of high school teachers - those who participated in (and some of them won) the the first ever Central and East European Regional Service-learning Award in 2020.

The rationale behind this decision lies within our interests to capture the perspectives of those who exposed themselves and their service-learning projects in a process of rigorous (external and international) evaluation within the protocol set up as part of the CEE Regional Service-learning Award. This part of the study was done in collaboration with the International Association "Interactive open schools" (MIOS), from Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the main organisers of the CEE Regional Service-learning Award.

The online questionnaire developed was distributed to all school take took participation in the CEE Regional Service-learning Award in 2020, and six of them replied and filled in the questionnaire - 2 schools from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 schools from Serbia, 1 school from Albania, 1 school from Romania, and 2 schools from Slovakia. Participants of this survey were teachers from the schools responsible for the service-learning implementation.

This part of the State-of-the-art report analyzes two main emerging themes - (I) participants' perspective on critical factors in the successful service-learning implementation, and (II) participants' perspective on key challenges in service-learning implementation.

6.1. Critical factors in the successful service-learning implementation

Data analysis on participants' perspectives related to the critical factors for successful service-learning integration in their schools yielded both internal and external factors that were grouped in following four themes - (I) institutional environment and school, (II) teachers and pupils, (III) community partners, and (IV) service-learning methodology. Interestingly, all of the critical factors reflected in this study by high school teachers, resemble those from the university professors as well.

(I) Institutional environment and school

Reflecting upon the **institutional environment and school**, study participants highly agree upon the importance of support from the school principles, and the general openness and support from the whole school environment in the context of promoting pupils' learning through new approaches and innovative methodologies. Besides, they find it important to engage other colleagues as well as parents. Other factors that influence (successful) service-learning project implementation are connected with the

school curriculum in the context of the importance of opening up the curriculum in a way to integrate various volunteering activities, thus making non-formal platforms of learning more official and more connected to the formal school environment. Participants' perspective on this particular issue is that **volunteering opportunities** open up amazing opportunities for pupils to learn, while still having fun. It seems that **making stronger connections between service-learning projects and pupils' volunteering** might be a way to promote service-learning as a mixed (formal and non-formal) platform for experiential learning in an unusual setting for a traditional schooling environment. Participants also mentioned good cooperation and communication among colleagues, supporting professionalism, and building non formal relationships between pupils and teachers.

(II) Teachers and pupils

Reflecting upon key actors - **teachers and pupils** - study participants are unanimous in labeling teachers' **motivation to engage in service-learning projects** as the most crucial factor for service-learning entry into schools. While they recognise the importance of pupils' motivation as well, they share a very strong belief that only *"highly motivated and enthusiastic teachers can also motivate other teachers and pupils"*. Beside their motivation, for service-learning projects to be successfully integrated, there is a need for **teachers' enthusiasm**, passion, and **dedication**. Study participants therefore reflect upon teachers in service-learning projects as **a role model** for young people. As study participants explain, for pupils to see their own teachers being engaged in addressing various local societal issues and helping others in their local community, means sharing a value of being a socially responsible and active citizen, committed to contributing to the well-being of your co-citizens, and your local community in general.

As study participants reveal further, teachers should also be **open-minded** and **creative**, as well as **interested in local issues, environment, community, and listening to other people and their needs**. In addition, participants perceive several more key factors in relation to the role of the teacher in the process of successful service-learning implementation: continuous **support** to pupils, **connecting with the local community**, and **recognizing** pupils' inclinations towards particular societal issues and capacity of gaining new knowledge and acquiring new skills.

Putting pupils in a perspective, study participants identified several factors which contributed to the successful service-learning implementation in their own schools, and those factors were grouped into three categories: (I) pupils' attitudes, (II) benefits for pupils, and (III) strategies for encouraging pupils' engagement.

When addressing pupils' attitudes, participants mainly focus on their attitudes toward activities in the community, associating those with **motivation**, pupils' volunteering engagement and their **desire to participate in extracurricular activities** organised in a way to nourish experiential, practical and project-based learning. Another attitude participants reveal is the importance of **pupils' openness to new (learning) experiences**, and their commitment to learning in general. In addition, participants also point to the importance of **targeting pupils' interests** as a precondition for service-learning project to be attractive in the first place. Another important element is the **relationship with teachers engaged in service-learning projects**, as participants discuss the pupils' 'preference'

towards certain kinds of teachers and their dispositions in the service-learning project. To put it in other words, participants reveal that “*pupils who consider and see in their teachers a mentor and a guide in life*”, are more likely to engage in service-learning projects run by such teachers.

The second category of factors supporting the successful service-learning project implementation is related to different **benefits for pupils**. There is consensus among participants that service-learning projects hold the **transformative potential** and can play a **life-changing role in pupils’ schooling experience**, as illustrated by one participant - “*Engaging students in such projects is beneficial to students and are truly life-changing experiences*”. Service-learning projects offer pupils the ‘space & time’ to engage in matters equally important for the school and the local community, to exchange and develop ideas, to gain practical skills, to develop **responsibility** towards their own engagement, a sense of empathy for the elderly and infirm people, while **supporting pupils’ creativity** at the same time. As it was put by one of the participants - “*In high schools we don’t need to teach them all; we need to let them study and research, and through service-learning there is an opportunity and space for pupils to learn from their mistakes and to dedicate themselves to exploring those issues and mistakes when they come home.*” Participants share the idea that service-learning projects in high schools are a great platform for **empowering** the young generation and **supporting the social inclusion** of young people.

The third, and the last category of factors associated with pupils is related to the **strategies for encouraging pupils’ engagement in service-learning projects**. Based on their own experience, participants shared different strategies that played a significant role in contributing to their own pupils’ engagement and to service-learning projects success - participation of a large number of pupils; team division, teamwork and naming a group/team leader; involving the pupils’ school board; special recognition for active pupils.

(III) Community partners

Putting community partners in a perspective of a successful service-learning project, study participants identified several factors, and those were grouped into three categories: (I) openness for collaboration, (II) roles of community partners, and (III) collaborative strategies.

Before even entering the ‘field’ of service-learning project, community partners need to be **open for collaboration with educational institutions**, which can then be ‘translated’ into willingness to collaborate with a school on a certain service-learning project. The second element relates to partnering roles in service-learning projects, and following their own experience, participants share the importance of having community partners engaged in at least two phases of the process - the needs assessment and problem identification, and monitoring pupils’ engagement and their progress. The third category of factors is related to **collaborative strategies**. Based on their own experience, participants revealed several issues that contributed to the successful implementation of service-learning projects in their own schools - engaging community partners from the very beginning so that they can have a sense of ownership as well; building strong link and good communication channels between teachers and pupils on a non-formal basis; building strong link and good communication channels between community and

school by involving parents as well; and the last strategy focuses on building long-term collaborative projects with same partners from the community to continue building mutual trust and joint contribution to the local community, as one participant illustrated - *“Organizing a suitable team is very important for the continuity of the project. Knowing who the team members are - teachers, pupils, parents, and community members - and creating a good two-way communication process with them all is really vital for the project”*.

(IV) Service-learning methodology

From the **service-learning methodology** perspective, participants reveal the importance of **respecting and following stages of the service-learning model**, doing step by step, especially if such a project is a novelty in a school, and if there is a lack of experience among teachers. Following, the (healthy) **partnership with community partners** is seen as a very important ‘ingredient’ for service-learning success, as one participant points out - *“You need to be a partner with the community in achieving the project’s goals and solving social problems and mutual interaction in non-formal tone is very important”*.

Without any surprise, participants discussed the importance of **knowing service-learning methodology** before coming on board with any idea for the project itself. Based on their own experience, participants pointed to the beginning of the project and **problem identification** as one the most important step in securing the successful flow of the service-learning project, that can be well illustrated by participants' statements:

“First of all, it is really essential to know how to start a project structure in order to have a positive project opening”.

“It is important to identify the problem that the school as an educational institution can solve, to be objective in looking at the resources that the school has and in communication with others to find a way and a way to solve the identified problem.”

“When beginning any kind of service-learning project, you need to clarify and identify the needs of the community.”

Last, but certainly not the least, the most often mentioned precondition was **motivation** on all partnering sides - related to the school principal, teachers, pupils, and community partners. This one is well described in one of the study participants' statements:

“It is very important to motivate your team, teachers, and pupils and to use all the leadership knowledge and skills available to achieve the objectives of a service-learning project.”

6.2. Key challenges in service-learning implementation

The challenges that study participants experienced in their own service-learning projects are connected with different issues, and can be categorised in three groups: (I) organisational and logistic

challenges, (II) stakeholders challenges, and (III) project challenges.

Challenges of the **organisational nature and coordination of various project activities** are mainly related to balancing teaching and service in a context of many other duties of both, teachers and pupils, as it can be illustrated well by one of the study participants statement:

“It was a great challenge to organize students, their arrivals and departures, arranging a large number of students with transportation; balancing all of that with regular teaching and learning, other pupils’ activities like training and volunteering in the community; also, monitoring the work of students within the partnering organisations”.

Participants reveal that in most of the cases all of those challenges were overcome by managing the time and using different tools that assisted them in better coordinating all of the activities planned.

Second category of challenges was connected with different stakeholders engaged, and their attitudes regarding service-learning and project implementation. One participant named high **“skepticism about the success of the project”**. Other participants mentioned **pupils’ motivation** as a great challenge for service-learning successful implementation, as they all wanted to engage pupils who will be truly motivated to participate in the projects, and not just formally participate.

The last category of challenges was connected with finding the right **idea for the project**, which will be based on the needs assessment and present a real community need, but still attractive for pupils and set up in a way that can be addressed in a timeframe given, and with a success of having solutions created by joint initiatives of all.

Organising a service-learning project following the whole-approach perspective from planning and all the way to celebrating everyone’s’ contribution surely has a lot of challenges alongside, but SLUSIK study participants’ experiences can serve as a certain indicator that service-learning projects can be successfully implemented in school settings.

7. Appendix

Appendix A.

SLUSIK PROJECT

BRIEF REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE ROLE MODELS, MENTORING AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical basis underpinning Role Modeling and Mentoring
 - 2.1. Motivational Theory of Role Modeling
 - 2.2. Theoretical overview on Mentoring
3. Role Model through Mentoring and Service-Learning
 - 3.1. Youth Mentoring
 - 3.3. Mentoring as Service-Learning
4. Effectiveness of youth mentoring: Moderators and potential influences
5. References

I. Introduction

This document intends to provide a non-systematic review and synthesis on three of the core elements underlying SLUSIK theoretical and intervention impact model. Those three basic components are Role Modeling, Mentoring and Service-Learning, and although they were proposed and developed at different moments from several applied fields in social sciences, evaluation research has revealed their functional and practical connections.

So, in order to track their interdependence from the theoretical and applied stand point, we first provide a brief background on the theoretical basis underpinning role models and role modeling in human learning and behavior. Second, we establish the links and versatility between the three conceptual tools to build interventions programs. And third, taking advantage of recent meta-analyses studies we highlight key results on these programs effectiveness across specific factors and variables.

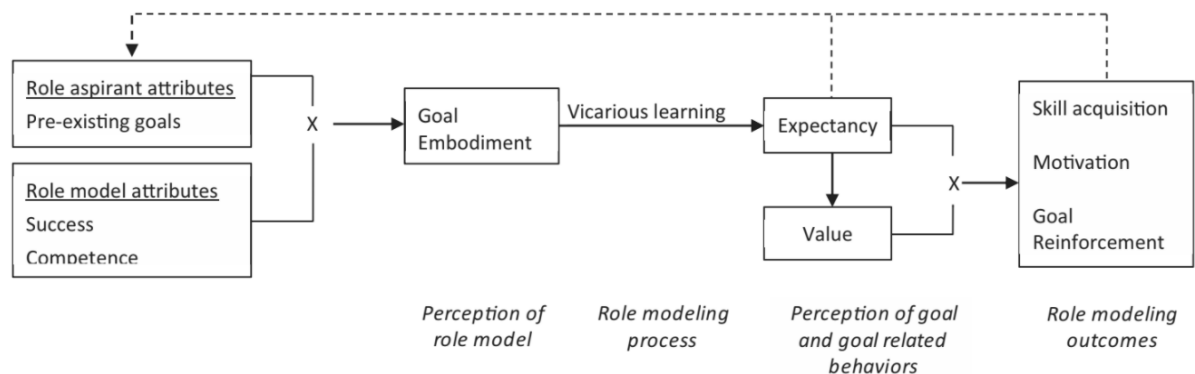
2. Theoretical Models underpinning Role Modeling and Mentoring

2.1. Motivational Theory of Role Modeling

Since its first appearance in 1950s by Merton (1957, as cited in Morgenroth et al., 2015) the term “role model” has experienced many different definitions, with the following three features as the most recurring, and interrelated (Morgenroth et al., 2015): (a) they show us how to perform a skill and achieve a goal —they are behavioral models (see Figure 1); (b) they show us that a goal is attainable —they are representations of the possible (see Figure 2); and (c) they make a goal desirable —they are inspirations.

Figure 1

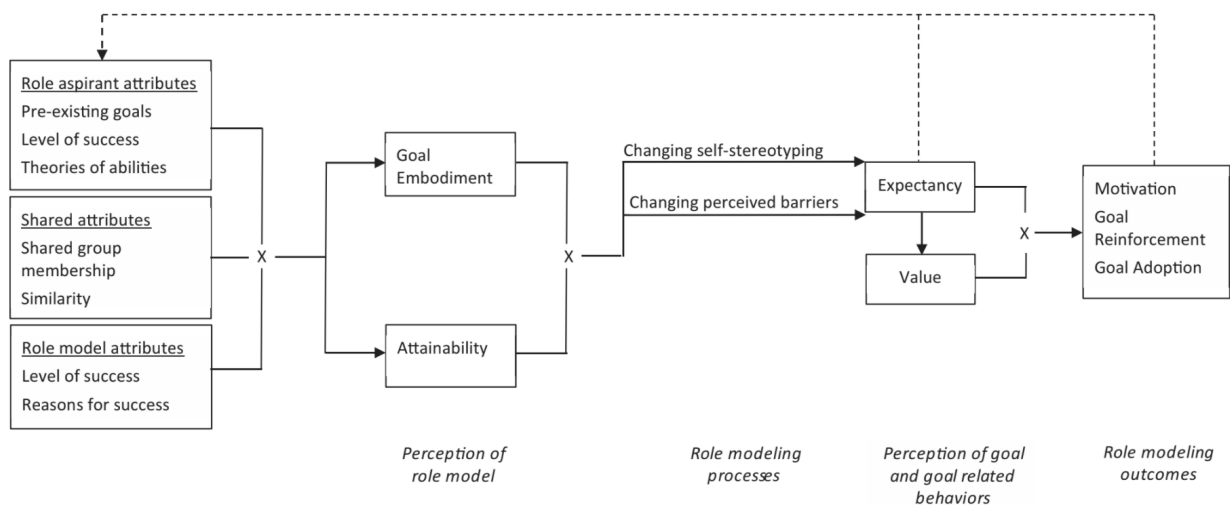
Role Models as Behavioral Models



Note. From “The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How Role Models Influence Role Aspirants’ Goals”, by T. Morgenroth, M. K. Ryan, and K. Peters, 2015, *Review of General Psychology*, 19(4), p. 472 (<http://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000059>). Copyright 2015 by the SAGE Publishing.

To function as behavioral models, continuous Morgenroth et al. (2015), potential role models need to embody a role aspirant's already existing goals. In achievement settings, this is likely to be linked to high levels of success or goal-related competence. Through vicarious learning experiences the role aspirant's self-efficacy, an important part of expectancy, increases. Moreover, role models can function as representations of the possible. Here, they need to be perceived by the role aspirant as attainable and embody an already existing or new goal to increase motivation to move toward an existing or adopt a new goal respectively.

Figure 2
Role Models as Representations of the Possible



Note. From “The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How Role Models Influence Role Aspirants’ Goals”, by T. Morgenroth, M. K. Ryan, and K. Peters, 2015, *Review of General Psychology*, 19(4), p. 475 (<http://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000059>). Copyright 2015 by the SAGE Publishing.

Role models are often seen as a way of motivating individuals to perform novel behaviors and inspire them to set ambitious goals. In educational and occupational settings, this is especially true for members of underrepresented and stigmatized groups. In these contexts, role models are often regarded as a panacea for inequality, by the general public, policymakers, and the academic literature alike (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

The extant literature on role model and the motivational expectancy-value provides us with important and interesting insights into the various factors that may impact on the effectiveness of role models such as shared group membership and similarity between role model and role aspirant, as well as level of role model success and the attribution of this success by the role aspirant (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

However, according to Morgenroth et al. (2015) despite these informative insights, the role model literature has a number of limitations like: (a) fragmentation; (b) lacks a clear definitional consensus on

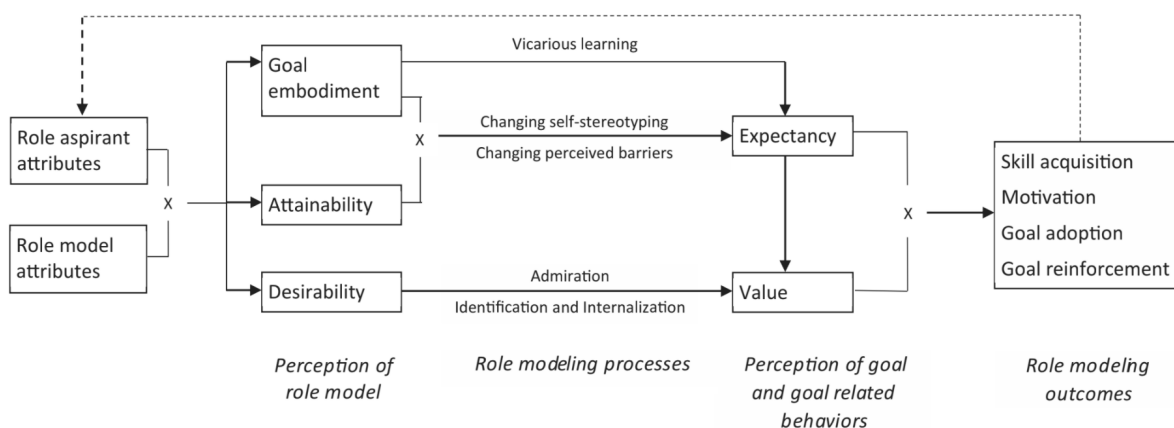
what role models are and what they can do; (c) lack of an integrated theoretical framework in which to situate, incorporate, and understand these findings; (d) limited understanding of how role models draw on individual motivation processes; and (e) how role models can influence ambitions, motivation, choices, and achievements of the so called ‘role aspirants,’ a term which should be understood as an individual who makes active, although not necessarily always conscious or deliberate, choices about in whose footsteps to follow based on their own values and goals.

The theoretical framework of the Motivational Theory of Role Modeling (see Figure 3) indicates that the type of intervention that is likely to be effective will depend on whether it aims at motivating role aspirants toward an already existing goal or toward the adoption of a new goal.

In this vein, Lockwood et al. (2015) suggest that people are especially sensitive to information that fits their dominant regulatory focus —promotion or prevention— and they show enhanced motivation and performance when they are encouraged to pursue strategies that match their regulatory concerns. It therefore seems reasonable that role models will be most effective when they foster strategies that fit one’s regulatory focus. Positive role models highlight promotion strategies, and so are most likely to motivate individuals with promotion goals; negative role models highlight prevention strategies, and so are most likely to motivate individuals with prevention goals.

It is also important to keep the interplay of desirability and attainability in mind. Indeed, some factors that may increase desirability may at the same time decrease attainability. Lastly, we have discussed how shared group membership is important for the role modeling process when role models act as representations of the possible and as inspirations and pointed out that this might particularly be the case when both the role model and the role aspirant are part of salient minority groups. Therefore, designing role model interventions which present a diverse range of potential role models is key to their effectiveness (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

Figure 3
Illustration of the Motivational Theory of Role Modeling



Note. From “The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How Role Models Influence Role Aspirants’ Goals”, by T. Morgenroth, M. K. Ryan, and K. Peters, 2015, *Review of General Psychology*, 19(4), p. 466 (<http://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000059>). Copyright 2015 by the SAGE Publishing.

In conclusion, as Bandura (1993) puts it, people are partly the product of their environment. Therefore, beliefs of personal efficacy can shape the course lives take by influencing choice of activities and environments. By the choices they make, people cultivate different competencies, interests, and social networks that determine life courses. Any factor that influences choice behavior can profoundly affect the direction of personal development. The material is structured for them in easily mastered subskills. The self-directed learning is supplemented with instructional social influences designed to enhance children's sense of academic efficacy. These influences include verbal modeling of cognitive strategies, proximal goal setting, ability and effort attributional feedback, positive incentives, and self-verbalization of task strategies. Furthermore, Weinber (2019) consider role modeling as a marker of identification in mentoring and the following behaviours as specific instrumental support behaviours delivered by mentors: providing task-related assistance, sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and coaching, and specific mentor psychosocial behaviors include offering counseling, unconditional acceptance, encouragement, and role modeling.

2.2. Theoretical overview on mentoring

The universal and fundamental need to form and maintain positive relationships with others occupies a prominent role in Maslow's influential theory of human needs or Deci and Ryan's Self-determination theory (Eby et al., 2013).

Following Eby et al., (2013), these authors recognized the importance of relationships and begs the question of how mentoring may uniquely fulfill the need to belong. Several characteristics of mentoring set it apart from other types of close relationships, such as friendships, student–teacher relationships, therapeutic relationships, and supervisory relationships. This includes the mentor serving as a role model to the mentee, differential experience between mentor and mentee, the provision of guidance by the mentor, an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, and tailoring the support provided to the unique developmental needs of the mentee.

Importantly, a mentoring relationship provides a safe environment for self-exploration, reflection, and self-expression. These validating experiences allow the mentee to explore alternative ways of thinking and acting, while eventually learning to operate more effectively without the support and guidance of the mentor. This may also build resiliency, which helps individuals persevere in the face of setbacks. While other relationships may involve some of these components, mentoring is unique by encompassing them all (Eby et al., 2013).

Mentoring is discussed as a strategy to increase student integration into the university community and profession, combat feelings of loneliness that often accompany the transition to college and graduate school, and facilitate engagement in learning (Eby et al., 2013).

As stated Eby et al., (2013), human capital theory proposes that individuals vary with respect to the investments they make in developing personal skills and abilities. These investments in time, energy, and money typically manifest in years of education, amount or breadth of training and experience, grade or level achieved, or hierarchical position. The development of human capital is important because it is

believed to confer advantages to individuals in terms of greater opportunities in the marketplace and economic stability.

Mentor human capital may positively influence perceptions of mentoring support because mentors with greater human capital have more expertise, skills, and wisdom to offer to their mentees. When mentors have more to offer their mentees, the mentor and/or the mentoring relationship may also be viewed more favorably by the mentee. Mentee human capital variables may also predict the amount of mentoring support received, with the general expectation that mentee's with greater experience, education, and potential for development will receive more mentoring support and report higher relationship quality than those with less human capital (Eby et al., 2013).

Rhodes (2002, 2005) model assumes that mentoring relationships can be of significant and enduring value for young people (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4

Model of Youth Mentoring

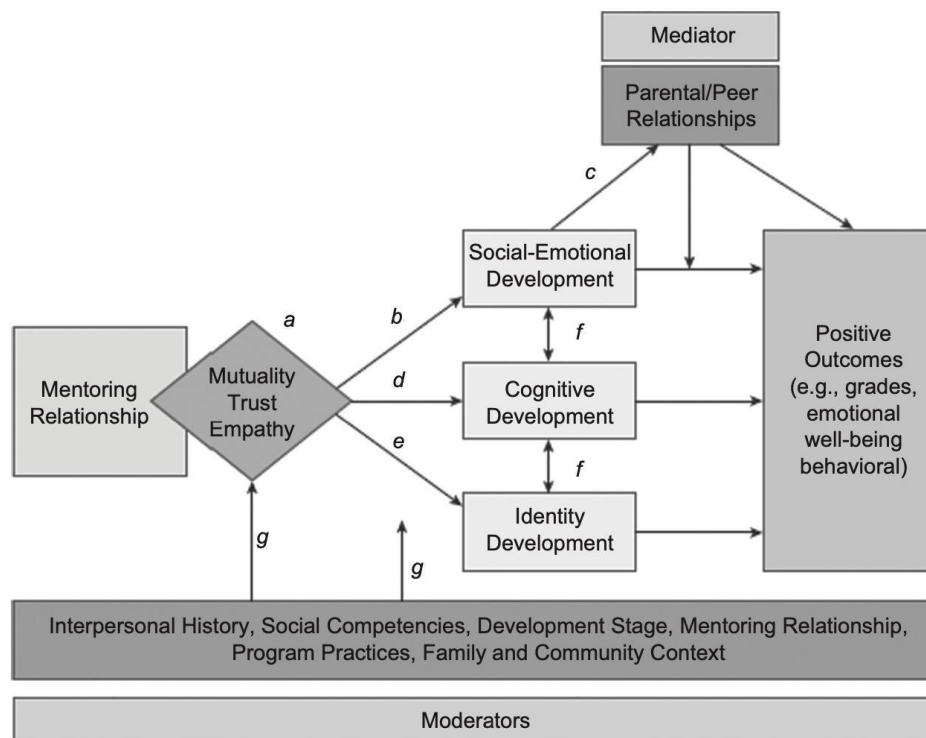


Fig. 1. Model of youth mentoring. A strong and meaningful personal connection is forged between the young person and mentor (component *a*), for instance in the context of working together on goal-oriented tasks. A positive interpersonal foundation is then posited to catalyze developmental processes in three areas—social-emotional (path *b*), cognitive (path *d*), and identity related (path *e*)—and these three areas are assumed to work in concert over time (*f* arrows). Positive social-emotional experiences with mentors can generalize, enabling youth to interact more effectively with parents and peers (path *c*), and these relationships can in turn mediate the effect of gains in social-emotional development on positive outcomes. The quality of the mentoring relationships and the pathways linking it ultimately to positive youth outcomes can be conditioned by factors pertaining to a youth's interpersonal history, social competence, and developmental stage; duration of the mentoring relationship; program practices involved in establishing and supporting the mentoring relationship and its duration; and the youth's family and surrounding community context (*g* arrows). Figure reprinted with slight modification from *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*, by Jean E. Rhodes, 2002, p. 36, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Copyright 2002, the President and Fellows of Harvard College. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Note. From “How Effective Are Mentoring Programs for Youth? A Systematic Assessment of the Evidence”, by D. L. DuBois, N. Portillo, J. E. Rhodes, N. Silverthorn, and J. C. Valentine, 2011, *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 12(2), p. 61 (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100611414806>). Copyright 2011 by the Association for Psychological Science.

3. Role Model through Mentoring and Service-Learning

3.1. Mentoring as Role Model

Definitions of mentoring vary, but there are common elements that can be identified across definitions. Most commonly the central feature is a one-on-one relationship between a provider (mentor) and a recipient (mentee) for the potential of benefit for the mentee (Tolan et al., 2013)

Strong empirical evidence exists for the influential role that supportive non-parental adults have in the lives of child and adolescents, and the presence of a competent, caring adult has been identified as a critical and necessary protective factor for youth at risk (Weiler et al., 2013)

Three distinct areas of mentoring scholarship exist, each of which corresponds to a different developmental stage (Eby et al., 2008): (a) youth mentoring adjusts more to the type of mentoring SLUSIK project comprises, that is, it involves a relationship between a caring, supportive adult and a child or adolescent, and assumes that supportive relationships with adults are important for personal, emotional, cognitive, and psychological growth; (b) academic mentoring typifies the apprentice model of education where a faculty member imparts knowledge, provides support, and offers guidance to a student protégé on academic (e.g., classroom performance) as well as non-academic (e.g., personal problems, identity issues); and (c) workplace mentoring occurs in an organizational setting and the purpose is the personal and professional growth of the mentee. The mentor may be a supervisor, someone else within the organization but outside the mentee chain of command, or an individual in another organization.

3.2. Mentoring as Service-Learning

The literature has a few examples of students mentoring students in S-L experiences. However, emerging literature on mentoring within S-L has shown that mentoring as a service-learning experience is associated with similar gains to participating in any other service-learning experience (Marchall et al., 2015). In this sense, positioning a youth mentoring program within the context of a service-learning course holds promise for simultaneously benefiting program participants, mentors and mentees (Weiler et al., 2013). Next, we provide some examples on this symbiotic relationship:

- A qualitative study by Banks (2010) indicated that college student mentor benefits included valuing the all-female setting, recognition of cultural dynamics, learning to negotiate group dynamics, confirmation of abilities and knowledge, and career guidance.
- A quantitative study found associations between service-learning mentoring and outcomes related to the development of civic-mindedness (Weiler et al., 2013): civic attitudes, community service self-efficacy, self-esteem, interpersonal problem-solving skills, civic action, and political awareness.

- Jackson (2002) examined the outcome of a mentoring program aimed at providing at-risk delinquent adolescents' with a positive, prosocial role model. Mentors indicated that their participation resulted in a greater understanding of adolescent development and enhanced education-related goal orientation.
- Schmidt et al. (2004) found that college student mentors of at-risk fourth graders were likely to report they had learned lessons about children, themselves, and their work as a mentor.
- Harwood and Radoff (2009) also found that mentors described a change in their own community attitudes as a result of mentoring.
- Hughes et al. (2009) evaluated mentors' experiences of mentoring youth attending high poverty high schools. Through qualitative analysis, results indicated benefits to mentors, including enhanced understanding of the challenges of poverty and what it is like for many of their mentees to live in poverty, and increased student commitment to civic participation.
- Weiler et al. (2014) examined the experience of mentors involved in Campus Corps youth mentoring program for high-risk youth. The goal of Campus Corps is to promote the resilience and life success of at-risk youth through strengthening social bonds, increasing academic engagement and performance, decreasing substance use and delinquent behaviors, and improving sense of self via the mentoring relationship.
- Arco et al. (2019) intend to demonstrate the impact of a peer-tutoring program on academic performance among first-year students. After a set of highly structured individual weekly tutoring sessions delivered by senior and doctoral students, previously trained in three training sessions, the results show moderate effects' size and statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group in the total academic course, as well as in the fall and spring semesters.
- Hervás et al. (2017, 2018) and Fernández et al. (2018) intended to establish alternative teaching methodologies to improve school climate, to eventually increase the acquisition of learning and skills, among students at risk of school and social exclusion. The results show improvements in school performance of the pupils in compulsory education, and improvements in the quantity and quality of interactions in the classroom, both from the perspective of students and of the educational-tutors, preventing school failure and early dropout.

4. Effectiveness of youth mentoring: Moderator and potential influences

Several meta-analyses (i.e., Blakeslee & Keller 2012; Christensen et al., 2020; DuBois et al., 2002, 2011; Eby et al, 2008; Raposa et al., 2019; Tolan et al., 2013; Van Dam et al., 2018; Wheeler et al., 2010) revealed that mentoring programs can produce positive outcomes for youth across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of development when implemented effectively.

However, these meta-analyses showed relatively overall small effects of mentoring across outcomes (Hedge's *g* values ranging from 0.18 to 0.21) (Christensen et al., 2020; Raposa et al., 2019), thus in response to the lack of improvement in the effect sizes of youth mentoring over the past two decades, Raposa et al. (2019) called for "more rigorous adherence to evidence-based practices that target specific mechanisms underlying particular youth difficulties, rather than relying on a relatively low-intensity, non-specific approach with uneven adherence to practices that are research-informed" (pp. 437-438).

As shown previously in Figure 4, the conceptual model posits that the quality of mentoring relationships experienced by youth and the pathways linking them ultimately to developmental outcomes can be conditioned by factors pertaining to (DuBois et al., 2011) (see Fig. 4, g arrows):

- Youth's interpersonal history: parental separation or abandonment, experiences of abuse or neglect, peer rejection, gang involvement/delinquency.
- Youth's social competence: emotional regulation, interpersonal sensitivity, capacity for engaging others.
- Youth's developmental stage (i.e., youth's age).
- Duration of the mentoring relationship (i.e., overall length duration relative to program expectation/mentor commitment).
- Program characteristics and practices: (a) program infrastructure and design: size of implementing agency (i.e., small, medium, large); (b) organizational focus on mentoring; (c) organizational experience (i.e., <5, 5–10, 11–20, >20 years in existence); (d) membership in umbrella organization or network; (e) evidence-based foundation (i.e., theory and/or research basis); (f) stakeholder involvement (i.e., youth, parents, mentors, and/or community members); (g) location (i.e., majority of mentoring takes place in community at large, at the youth's school, or at other specific sites); (h) duration (i.e., <6 months, 6–12 months, >12 months); (i) orientation (i.e., instrumental, psychosocial, combined, or sequential, active, focused, and explicit); (j) tailoring to specific population of youth; (k) format (i.e., one-on-one vs. group/team mentoring; in-person vs. e-mentoring); (l) mentor-youth contact (i.e., established expectations and, if yes, amount of contacts/hours expected); (l) relationship duration (i.e., established expectations and, if yes, minimum commitment <6 months, 6–11 months, 12 or more months); (m) mentor role functions (i.e., emotional support, teaching/information provision, advocacy, modeling, serving as identification figure); (n) youth (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, individual risk level, environmental risk level) and mentor (i.e., age, education level, helping backgrounds, degree of similarity to demographic backgrounds of youth, shared experiences with youth, and fit of educational and occupational background with program goals) characteristics; and (o) program practices (e.g., mentor screening; mentor training —initial and ongoing; mentor youth matching criteria —personality, interests, gender, race/ethnicity; support for mentor youth activities —organized activities/curriculum, goal-setting; supervision —mentors and youth; parental outreach and support; mentor compensation, accountability provisions, and recognition; systematic tracking of program activities and mentoring relationships).
- The youth's family and surrounding community context: family structure and resources (i.e., socioeconomic status, structure, size, mobility/inmigration status, conflict/dysfunction), family relationships quality, access to informal mentoring or availability of positive role models, school characteristics, and neighborhood resources and risk factors (i.e., crime, drug use, and/or violence).

Furthermore, recent meta-analyses examine a wide range of youth, mentor, and program characteristics that are considered potential moderators of program effects, given increasing evidence that certain individual and program factors might significantly influence the impact of mentoring. For this summary we highlight the following factors and features (DuBois et al., 2011; Raposa et al., 2019):

- *Youth characteristics.* There is some evidence that youth mentoring may be more effective with mid- to late-elementary school-aged children, while mentoring relationships are less close and enduring with adolescent mentees; youth gender may also influence the impact of mentoring relationships; programs serving a greater proportion of male mentees had stronger effects; youth belonging to environmental risk (e.g., poverty, neighborhood violence) and lower SES may benefit more

from mentoring, although alternative results have also been found; in this line, youth exhibiting behavioral difficulties such as delinquent behavior or discipline problems at school, and youth who exhibit personal vulnerability as defined also by other indicators such as risk for academic failure, benefit more from mentoring programs.

- *Mentor characteristics.* Several mentor characteristics have also been linked to the effectiveness of youth mentoring. Research indicates that mentor age may affect program outcomes. Specifically, student mentors who volunteer through high school and college programs tend to be less effective than older volunteer mentors. In contrast, mentors who have more experience in helping roles or professions (e.g., counselor, social worker, therapist) have been found to be more effective than those with non-helping backgrounds, both in formal mentoring relationships and in naturally-occurring or informal mentoring relationships. Studies of mentor demographic variables, such as race and gender, have yielded less consistent results, with most studies showing no effect of these variables on mentoring relationship outcomes.

- *Mentor recruitment and selection.* The greater effectiveness of programs in which mentors' educational or occupational backgrounds were well matched to program goals points toward the additional importance of issues relating to mentor recruitment and selection. In view of the importance of interpersonal processes in youth mentoring, a further useful approach could be to recruit or select mentors whose backgrounds are especially well matched to program goals that are more relational in nature.

- *Program characteristics.* There is substantial diversity in program practices that are included under the umbrella of youth mentoring, which may have implications for the benefits that youth derive from the intervention. Some programs provide mentor incentives, either in the form of payment or course credit, rather than relying on pure volunteerism. Such practices are based on the assumption that increased fidelity will offset incentive costs, although an earlier meta-analysis failed to find significant differences in effects. Other variations in program practices relate to expectations for the mentor and youth, including the expected length of the relationship and recommended activities during mentor-youth meetings. Some studies have linked relationship duration to mentee outcomes, showing the greatest benefits from relationships lasting at least 12 months. In contrast, other studies suggest that meeting the expected time commitment for the relationship is more important than the actual length of the relationship; alternatively recent meta-analyses have failed to detect differences in program effects based on match length. Importantly, there is also considerable variation in the focus of the mentoring relationship, and thus, the intervention that a particular youth receives. For example, some programs focus on academic or vocational development, while others are more general in their focus. Although all of these types of programs fall under the category of mentoring, the interventions they are delivering can vary significantly in ways that influence the benefits that are derived; yet, little research has systematically compared the effects of these different approaches to youth mentoring.

- *Criteria for matching youth with mentors.* Synthesis of research points to the value of taking into account similarity of mentor and youth interests in matching decisions. A variety of specific strategies may be useful for programs to consider in this area. These include, for example, matching mentors and youth based on shared interests that are most relevant to program goals, such as career interests in the case of a work-based mentoring program. Existing trends in program effectiveness clearly support the value of investing resources in the development and refinement of such approaches when

designing mentoring interventions for youth. It is worth noting, however, that although matching ethnic-minority youth with same-race mentors where possible is a common goal in mentoring programs, research has failed to reveal a consistent pattern of differences favoring these types of relationships. In line with other literature on helping relationships, the available evidence suggests that optimal matching of youth and mentors goes beyond demographic characteristics to encompass deeper and more nuanced considerations of compatibility.

- *Mentor-role expectations.* There is evidence of stronger effects in programs that are designed for mentors to serve in an advocacy role as well as in those that are structured to facilitate mentors serving as teachers and sources of information. Together, these trends suggest the value of mentors offering active guidance to youth and making concerted efforts to ensure their overall welfare. Prior research provides good reason to be concerned with mentors becoming overly directive or task focused in their interactions with youth. Similarly, it undoubtedly will be counterproductive to task volunteer mentors with quasi-therapeutic roles that they are ill-equipped to handle. It is clear, however, that programs aspiring to a more purposeful or intentional role for mentors often have been able to accomplish this in ways that enhance rather than detract from effectiveness. As it has been found in prior meta-analysis effectiveness was not significantly greater when programs adopted a primary emphasis on instrumental aims or when there was a focus on providing explicit skills training within a structured framework. In this regard, the distinctive potential of mentoring programs with respect to skill building and advocacy resides more in their capacity to leverage the flexibility and often potent processes of social influence that are inherent to close relationships.

- *Non-specific versus targeted approaches to youth mentoring.* Nonetheless, the vast majority of mentoring programs provide non-targeted care, encouraging mentors to provide general friendship, support, and role modeling aimed at broad developmental goals. This approach is based on the assumption that the mentor–youth relationship itself is the primary active ingredient of change. In particular, a close, supportive relationship with an adult is thought to provide youth with a “corrective experience” which, in turn is thought to lead to improvements in youth functioning across a broad range of developmental domains. In fact, according to proponents of this non-specific, relationship-focused model of mentoring, targeted, skills-based approaches may actually be counter-indicated insofar as they may hamper relationship-building. Yet there is emerging evidence that more targeted, problem-specific approaches to mentoring may yield larger effects. Programs that have taken a structured approach often do so in response to the fact that many youth who are referred to mentoring programs present with significant emotional, behavioral, or academic difficulties. More recent findings suggest that youth mentoring programs can promote positive outcomes, particularly when mentors employ targeted approaches matched to the needs of their mentees.

- *Methodological predictors of mentoring effect sizes.* Although typically unexamined in the mentoring literature, an important factor that has been consistently shown to predict effect sizes in meta-analyses from other fields involves the methodological approach of the study. Specifically, research shows that studies employing random assignment yield smaller effect sizes than those employing less rigorous quasi-experimental designs, additionally, published studies tend to report greater effect sizes than unpublished reports due to biases in publishing significant results.

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Appendix B.

Interview protocol - academics with extensive service-learning experience

Context of research: This research is part of the [service-learningUSIK project](#): Service Learning Upscaling Social Inclusion, a project co-funded by the EU's Erasmus+ Social Inclusion programme.



The main objective of the project is enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences, fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights. For this project, the consortia will use the Service Learning model already in place in the universities that are partners in the project, “scale it up” and “test” in cooperation with high schools in 5 countries and advocate for service learning to be part of the secondary school curriculum. The project will run on the basis of existing models and will require extensive involvement of a wide group of stakeholders, such as teachers, educational practitioners, schools, HEIs, decision makers and NGOs working in the field of education and others. The project will produce an adaptable model and materials to be used across Europe both by policy makers and schools in different school contexts and situations. The service-learningUSIK Project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, is led by the Malta Business Bureau (Malta) 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).

Research goal: To gain deeper insights into the perspectives of academics with extensive service-learning experience on key aspects of their service-learning courses within their institutional and national context

Purpose of the research: To develop recommendations for university and secondary school teachers from five European countries who will jointly develop service-learning projects for the secondary school institutional context.

Research Questions: What experiences do university teachers have with the integration of service-learning in their daily teaching in higher education, what challenges do they face and how do they overcome them and how do they maintain a positive attitude towards the integration of this model?

Aims:

- To better understand motivational reasons for integrating service-learning and the cycle of changes of motivational reasons over time of service-learning experience
- To gain better insight into various models of their (professional) education/development related to service-learning
- To better understand their perspective on competences needed to successfully integrate service-learning in higher education teaching
- To gain better insight into their perspective on students' perspective and benefits for students
- To get their recommendations on how to improve service-learning in the national context

Interview protocol - questions

- Gender
 - Age
 - Number of years working in academia
 - Number of year experiencing service-learning
- 1) Reflecting upon your own service-learning experience and going back to those early beginnings, how would you describe your initial motivational reasons? Have those reasons change over time and if yes, how?
 - 2) How did you gain knowledge and skills related to service-learning? Have you attended any professional development training? If yes, could you please share more insights of their contribution?
 - 3) What are the key characteristics of service-learning from your own perspective?
 - 4) What do you think are basic competences needed to successfully integrate SL in higher education teaching?
 - 5) Looking back at your own experience, what is your perspective on students' perspective experiencing service-learning at your courses? If you can share some of your documented experiences and evaluation, how do students reflect upon their own experiences?
 - 6) To what extent do you believe service-learning can strengthen students' social and civic competencies?
 - 7) What do you think your university gained from the service-learning partnerships?
 - 8) What do you think was the key to success for your own service-learning implementation?
 - 9) What were some of the major challenges you encountered and what strategies have you used to overcome those? How did you cope with those challenges?
 - 10) What are some of the key elements of service-learning that you think might be, and should be transferred to service-learning projects in other educational institutions, e.g. secondary schools?
 - 11) What would be some of your key recommendations for secondary school teachers that intended to engage in service-learning projects?
 - 12) What would be some of the major recommendations for further development of service-learning in your own institutional and national context?
 - 13) Are you aware of any model/experience/study about service-learning that can be useful for the SLUSIK project? Please share it with us.

Appendix C.

Small-scale SLUSIK study on Service-learning in Austria.

(questionnaire)

1. Since how many years have you been engaged in teaching or educational services? (school, NGO, tertiary)

- 1) 0-2
- 2) 3-6
- 3) 7-10
- 4) More than 10

2. Since how many years have you been engaged in Service Learning as a teacher/ an education professional?

- 1) Less than 1
- 2) 1-4
- 3) 5-6
- 4) More than 6

3. At which school level did you engage in Service Learning as a teacher/ an education professional? You can choose more than one option.

- 1) Primary
- 2) Lower Secondary
- 3) Upper Secondary
- 4) Tertiary (University, FH, PH etc.)
- 5) Non-school Education Institution
- 6) Other

4. What experience do you have with Service-Learning (SL)? Please check all that apply.

- 1) I currently teach one or more classes that involve SL
- 2) I have taught SL class(es) in the past
- 3) I have participated in SL project in an extracurricular/volunteer program
- 4) I have very little experience with SL
- 5) Other

5. How would you rate the interest level in Service Learning among teachers, education professionals, your colleagues in Austria?

- 1) Definitely interested
- 2) Very likely to be interested
- 3) Maybe will be interested
- 4) Not likely to be interested
- 5) Absolutely not interested
- 6) Other

6. Based on your knowledge, which types of Service Learning take place in Austria?

- 1) Tutoring other students, adults or elderly
- 2) Conducting art/music/dance lessons for youth/local community
- 3) Helping in a homeless shelter
- 4) Planning and putting on public forums on topics of interest in the community
- 5) Conducting public information campaigns on topics of interest or local needs
- 6) Working with Hospice patients
- 7) Restoring historic structures or building low-income housing
- 8) Restoring ecosystems in preserve areas for public use
- 9) Other

7. Would you agree with the sentences below? Please check all that apply.

- 1) There is sufficient institutional support for Service-Learning efforts in Austria
- 2) There is no sufficient institutional support for Service-Learning efforts in Austria
- 3) Teachers and education professionals are aware of the services provided by the institutions to improve Service-Learning
- 4) Teachers and education professionals do not know well enough where to find help on Service-Learning

8. Please complete the sentence. You can select more than one option.

“Every student should have to do a Service Learning project in order to graduate from”

- 1) Primary School (Age 10)
- 2) Compulsory Education (Age 15)
- 3) Upper Secondary (Age 18)
- 4) Tertiary Level (University, FH, PH, Akademie)
- 5) Teacher Training (University, PH, BAfEB/ BAfEB Kolleg)

**9. Which challenges do you think are relevant for implementing Service-Learning (SL) in Austria?
Please check all that apply.**

- 1) Not enough support system for teachers and education professionals on how to implement SL
- 2) Not enough explicit focus on SL in the school curriculum
- 3) Not enough efforts in teacher education to train teachers for SL
- 4) Not enough in-service training (Fort- und Weiterbildung) for teachers about SL
- 5) Not enough flexibility within the school curriculum to implement SL projects
- 6) Not enough interest of teachers and education professionals in SL
- 7) Not enough interest of students to take part in SL projects
- 8) Not enough support from the school direction to implement SL projects
- 9) Not enough parental support to implement SL projects
- 10) Other

Appendix D.

Questions for nominated/awarded SL projects - CEE Regional SL Award 2020

Context of research: This research is part of the [SLUSIK project](#): Service Learning Upscaling Social Inclusion, a project co-funded by the EU's Erasmus+ Social Inclusion programme.

The main objective of the project is enhancing the acquisition of social and civic competences, fostering knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights. For this project, the consortia will use the Service Learning model already in place in the universities that are partners in the project, “scale it up” and “test” in cooperation with high schools in 5 countries and advocate for service learning to be part of the secondary school curriculum. The project will run on the basis of existing models and will require extensive involvement of a wide group of stakeholders, such as teachers, educational practitioners, schools, HEIs, decision makers and NGOs working in the field of education and others. The project will produce an adaptable model and materials to be used across Europe both by policy makers and schools in different school contexts and situations. The SLUSIK Project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, is led by the Malta Business Bureau (Malta) in collaboration with Out of the Box International (Belgium), Rijeka University (Croatia), University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Granada (Spain), University College of Teacher Education, Vienna (Austria), Matej Bel University

Research goal: To gain deeper insights into the perspectives of high school teachers on key aspects of the success of SL projects / classes in their high school (institutional) contexts.

Purpose of the research: To develop recommendations for university and secondary school teachers from five European countries who will jointly develop SL projects for the secondary school institutional context.

Who fills in the questionnaire: We don't need principals, we need teachers involved in the planning and implementation of SL projects, those who were really engaged - ideally it would be teachers who participated in the CEE SL Award because the whole context is in fact an argument for why I just chose projects from the CEE region, and not from some other countries (emphasis in the argumentation we put on this whole systematic procedure, blind review and evaluation process).

Leaning on your own experience with service-learning projects, and especially having in mind the project that was nominated/awarded at CEE Regional Service-learning Award 2020, please share your thoughts on following questions:

1. What do you think are 3 of the most important things that contributed to your SL project success in general? Feel free to share more information for each one.
2. What do you think are 3 the most important things that contributed to your SL project success and are connected with the teachers engaged? Feel free to share more information for each one.
3. What do you think are 3 the most important things that contributed to your SL project success and are connected with the students engaged? Feel free to share more information for each one.
4. What do you think are 3 the most important things that contributed to your SL project success and are connected with your community/community partners? Feel free to share more information for each one.
5. What was the biggest challenge you had in implementing your SL project(s) so far and if you were successful in managing it, how did you overcome it?
6. Leaning on your SL experience, what would you say to other high school teachers who have decided to launch their own SL project but still have no experience?
7. What do you think everyone needs to know about the particular context of high schools before starting a SL project in a high school?

Appendix E.

Additional resources useful for SLUSIK

The University College of Teacher Education in Upper Austria

<https://pro.ph-ooe.at/claudia-fahrenwald>

<https://ph-ooe.at/demokratieinschule>

The University College of Teacher Education in Salzburg

<https://imaginingdesires.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Programm-Tagung-Salzburg.pdf>

The University College of Teacher Education in Styria

https://www.bbfk.at/images/BBFK_2018/Dokumentation/P2-2-2_Fernandez_Slepcevic.pdf

University of Graz

<https://lehr-studienservices.uni-graz.at/de/servicelearning/>

University of Vienna

<https://engagestudents.pub.ro/>

In terms of models, there are a number of NGO, and at 3rd level especially in North America which has a proliferation of different approaches – one of the earliest ones is The Giraffe Project which helped invent the concept and best practices of service learning two decades ago (The Essential Elements first published April 1998). Their learning guide was included in a group of best practices in a UNESCO online course for 2020. These resources are available in English and Spanish. (<http://www.7saber.es>).

Models are slightly harder to recommend but perhaps the OECD learning Compass is a good teaching and learning example that could be useful in some way for thinking about the SLUSIK model:

<https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/>

<http://www.slihe.eu/>