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SERVICE-LEARNING IN YOUTHWORK HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH WORKERS



Volunteering as an
Educational Opportunity

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Introduction

European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion calls on the Commission, the Member States and regional and local authorities to promote volunteering through education at all levels, creating opportunities for voluntary activity at an early stage in the education system so that it is seen as normal contribution to community life and to continue to promote such activity as students grow older, to facilitate ‘service-learning’ where students work with voluntary or community groups in partnership, to encourage links between the voluntary sector and the education sector at all levels and to promote volunteering and recognize learning in volunteering as a part of lifelong learning. Many organizations and youth workers see volunteering as an educational opportunity, but they are not fully using its educational potential. To have balance in volunteering between education and personal growth of the volunteer on one hand, and fulfilling the real needs of the community is not always easy for local, as well as international volunteers. Many times, it happens, there is strong focus on solidarity service and meeting the need of beneficiaries without an articulated learning process. Volunteer coordinators and youth workers think that the learning through volunteering is happening “automatically” and when they should recognize and validate the process of non-formal learning they have difficulties naming outcomes of learning from volunteering experience.

Service-learning combines meaningful service in the community with education. Service-learning can be promoted in formal, as well as non-formal education or as a connection between formal and non-formal education. Two directions can be identified. Service-learning projects can be developed by schools – formal education through educational policy, but also they can be promoted within the NGO’s as a strategy for youth work – through youth policy. Service-learning can be also recognized as a way of education for volunteering or active citizenship. There are many young people who could be a valuable resource for active citizenship but either have not learnt to be active and proactive or are lost in the information boom they are facing today. The most significant findings from international research have suggested that service-learning has a positive effect on young people in several areas. These areas include the development of the so-called key competences (e.g., communication skills, leadership, cooperation with others, cultural understanding, responsibility, learning, problem-solving skills, development of critical thinking, etc.) and civic engagement and empowering young people so they believe they can bring the change in the society.

The potential of the SL in CEE countries has still not been used enough, because of the missing structures, lack of competence and experience in development of the strategy. The service-learning has originated in the U. S. and its implementation in the European context has some particularities related to social and cultural differences and the need for engagement and participation in the civic society and community life.

Within the frame of the Erasmus+ project “Volunteering as an educational opportunity”, the so-called EDUVOL, the project partner organizations aim to improve the quality and relevance of the education offer in the field of implementation of the service-learning in youth work, to enhance capacities of organizations and youth workers in implementing service-learning concept in practice and possibilities of its implementation in cooperation with local as well as international youth volunteers, and to increase the quality of youth work primary in area of youth volunteering. Therefore, a series of publications have been issued for youth workers and other stakeholders who are open to undertake the responsibility of establishing and running a service-learning approach in their organizations for the benefit of all parties involved.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide support to youth workers who decide to implement service-learning in their organizations. The manual is structured in several chapters, which provide an overview of the key issues of service-learning understanding and implementation in youth work.

Manual is dedicated to youth workers working in non-formal education, but teachers of primary and secondary schools in formal education settings can also use it. In the manual we are using the term youth, young people and youth worker. Young people are persons 13 – 30 years old. For the purposes of European youth policies this age is used both by the European Commission and Council of Europe (2004). Youth workers are people who work in direct contact with young people and carry out activities designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning. Youth workers can be professionals or volunteers, and can be civil servants or work for non-governmental organizations (European Commission, 2015).

1. Service-learning as an educational tool in youth work

The literature in the field indicates several basic theoretical definitions of service-learning, as well as numerous paradigms and perspectives in which this strategy is viewed. SL is understood as an experience, a pedagogical concept, pedagogy, learning technique, philosophical concept, a social movement. Service-learning (sometimes referred to as community-based or community-engaged learning) is often known in the literature as a pedagogy that combines service to the community with learning opportunities offered to the involved young people. (Heffernan, 2001) Service-learning is generally described as a “balanced approach to experiential education” that can “ensure equal focus on both the service provided to the community and the learning that is occurring” (Furco, 1996, p.3).

Regardless of the number of definitions of SL, several key components have been identified in the literature:

1. It is a pre-planned and organized experience, gained through a service that responds to the authentic needs of the community. Service-learning supports a change in the traditional assistive model (service for the community) to a horizontal model of solidarity (service with the community).
2. It is based on active involvement of young people in all stages of a service-learning project, from planning to evaluation. Young people should feel ownership of the SL project and act as leaders of activities, not only their implementers.
3. Service-learning experience is intentionally connected with the curriculum. There is a clear connection of service to the objectives of education.
4. It provides a temporal sequence that allows participants to reflect on the service-learning experience.

The community service can be incorporated into the curriculum of various subjects and study programs in formal education and we believe that it can be integrated also in the youth work.

1.1. Service-learning basics

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy in which the learning process takes place through a targeted service activity, which is later subject to reflection. The youth worker and young person set learning objective, which young person achieves by participating in a service activity that meets a detected community need, and by later reflecting on the experience with a youth worker. Service-learning focuses on both the activity that is beneficial to the community, and the educational benefits that result from it for the person undertaking the activity. The **reciprocal character** of service-learning means: the local community gets something they need, and the person who takes action for the benefit of others acquires new knowledge and competences (Furco, 1996).

An important aspect of the service-learning process is also the **youth leadership**. The youngsters should check what are the needs of a local community, find a way to solve a problem or to reduce it, decide on what to do and how. They would need the support of a youth worker, but they should take the main responsibility of the project, while feeling and taking leadership. The youth worker is setting up educational goals and guiding the reflection process through the whole project – to ask questions on what is going on, what can be learned, and how, what should be corrected, what was difficult, and how to make it easier etc. The youth worker should help participants in finding solutions, but should not give it to them or complete tasks instead of them.

Reciprocity

Leadership youth

Learning process

Guided reflection on the learning process

Service-learning works in group work contexts. However, it is possible to use some aspects of the method in individual work, especially the guided reflection.



Example:

A medical student volunteering at a retirement home could benefit greatly from the service-learning method. Working with a tutor, he could set learning objectives related to the health of seniors, and then with his youth worker discuss and analyze his work, and any specific situations that emerge on a daily basis to meet these objectives. Thanks to this, he could e.g. gain practical skills related to working with seniors, and expand his knowledge of geriatrics. He could also learn about his strengths in this type of work, or look at what tends to be difficult for him. Reflect on how to deal with such difficulties, and check it in practice. And the elderly people's home would be supported by a volunteer, all the more involved in his activities.

It can be a good method to learn project work in a team. The participants can share tasks, and in that way – each using their own talents, knowledge and skills, - work together to implement a project that meets the needs of the local community. As a result, they can develop knowledge and skills related to a specific problem area, but also develop their soft skills e.g. communication and teamwork.



Example:

An example of implementing the service-learning method in working with a group could be an activity carried out by a school volunteer club, such as organization of a board games club for elderly people. The idea of such a club should appear after the identification of the needs of a local community, and youngsters should discuss it with seniors. In order to organize the event, young people would have to deal with various issues such as: choosing the right room, booking the room, arranging equipment in it, inviting seniors and setting meeting dates, organizing snacks and drinks, selecting games, co-hosting the event etc. Some learning objectives could be the same for the whole group (e.g. practicing communication skills: giving instructions, explanations), but some should be individualized depending on the role and tasks of specific participants (e.g. budget management, planning expenses for snacks etc). The club's supervisor could play the role of a youth worker enhancing the learning process by encouraging participants to reflect on the steps of the project and the skills/competences they are acquiring.

Service-learning, apart from teaching specific skills, directs the learners' reflection on community problems, and helps them not only to notice the problems, but also to look for solutions. As a result, projects developed with the use of this method often become the starting point for subsequent service activities.

Service-learning enhances young people's

- sense of agency,
- responsibility (the success of the entire project requires commitment at all stages, and taking responsibility for specific tasks),
- personal efficacy,
- leadership,
- interpersonal skills,
- critical thinking,
- ability to reflect and self-reflect,
- sense of being connected to the local community,
- increased awareness of the world,
- increased awareness of one's personal values,
- social commitment,
- knowledge and skills related to activities implemented in a project (Astin 2000).

1.2. Difference in the concepts service-learning, volunteering and educational activity

When operating with a service-learning concept, it is suggested that a distinction has to be made between community service, volunteering, field education, internship, educational activities and service-learning (Fiske, 2001; Furco & Holland, 2005; Lipčáková & Matulayová, 2012). Thus, service-learning distinguishes itself from other types of community-oriented activities by its connection with curriculum content, aiming to enrich the learning process by a better understanding of learning content, to promote the civic responsibility of the young people students, and to strengthen communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Fiske, 2001; Rusu, Bencic, & Hodor, 2014).

Service-learning (SL) is a pedagogical approach that brings together planned learning and community service. Depending on the context in which it is framed, service-learning can be linked to academic learning (curriculum requirements at different subjects in school, based on the formal education standards) or non-formal learning (learning objectives established by youth workers for the activities implemented by youth in the community, linked with a variety of transversal skills they need in life, not linked to a particular school subject). In the context of the present manual, service-learning is the process in which young people contribute in their community to solving real issues and needs (the service part), but they are doing this while learning very specific elements and acquiring concrete and pre-planned skills and knowledge (the learning part). This turns service-learning into a complex approach to learning of youth that does not intend to deliver learning processes in a dry manner, but it is learning by doing and, more than that, it is learning by doing good for others. Service-learning will in this case combine needs (those of the community and specific beneficiaries and those of young people), resulting in a win-win approach that generates very visible community results, and at the same time causes meaningful and durable learning.

Volunteering is an action or activity performed by individuals (alone or in groups), providing service or offering help to others, or for a specific community, without any payment for this work, for the general public benefit and based on their free will of getting involved. Volunteering can happen in planned contexts or it can be informal, as a spontaneous action coming from people who see others in need, and decide to act. However, for the purpose of the present manual, we refer to the planned or formal volunteering, which takes place based on the intention of organizations or public institutions to create volunteering opportunities for citizens as a means of them actively participating in society. In this situation, volunteering will have a series of procedures and regulations, which differ from one country to the other, but the 3 main conditions for an activity to be called volunteering will be the same: it is benevolent/done out of one's free will and choice; it is not paid (even if costs incurred by volunteers – activity costs, may be covered); it is aimed towards the community and public good (not for one's own family, not meant to generate financial profit).

Professional practice is a learning period in which students or trainees acquire specific knowledge and skills related to their field of study or work. The professional practice is a part of a study program in high school and university (sometimes also in secondary schools), in which students will have a practical study period, usually outside the classroom, interacting with real actors in the community, and on the job market, where they can put in practice the theoretical learning they acquired in school on a certain subject. This professional practice is then part of the study program, it is often mandatory to take part in, has clear learning objectives connected to the academic curriculum and will be evaluated by teachers. Even though it may take place in the community and for the benefit of people in need, or for social causes, the intention to get involved in it is related to the student's need to learn and acquire practical skills, and not with the intention of serving others, as in the case of volunteering.

There are also other types of internships, which resemble on-the-job training programs, where students or graduates of a study program (either high school or university degree) will participate in a short-term intensive program where they learn a job (or elements of it) by doing the job, and acting as an employee with the same tasks. These internship or traineeship programs are optional, done out of free will, and with a clear interest on the part of the trainee to learn, acquire concrete skills and prepare for a career in the field. Most of the time, these study periods will be paid (according to the legislation in each country), as the trainee is delivering tasks and work for the benefit of the employee, even if they are also learning in the process (so benefitting personally).

Educational activities are any type of activities that are organized in order to reach one or more learning objectives, or in other words, activities that offer a planned learning experience. In youth work we find them frequently in the various forms of non-formal or informal education – it could be a training course, a workshop,

a forum theater, a game etc. They could be aimed at our own team of volunteers or they themselves could be the ones to deliver them to a larger audience.

Given the fact that they are almost always connected to the organization’s cause, and therefore to a specific community need, we might easily confuse an educational activity with a service-learning project. In fact, a service-learning project must include an educational activity. However, the learning activity in the service-learning project has to be aimed at the young people who participate in our project, and the young people have to reach their learning objectives by implementing an activity that directly serves the community. For example, if the educational activity is a training that aims to teach people about healthy eating habits and the participants of this training are partly people from the community and partly the young people we work with, some could argue that the young people are learning something, the community need is satisfied, so we could present our training as a service-learning project. But in this case, the young people are simply passive participants that develop their knowledge just like the others. They are not implementing an activity through which they learn, they are just taking part in a training course.

If however, the young people are involved in designing the training curriculum, the materials, in organizing the logistics, making sure that the training runs smoothly for the participants, take photos and promote the training course, or create materials that are published following the training and promote them to inform an even larger number of participants, then the project would indeed be a service-learning project. The young people would reach their own learning objectives (that could be event planning, logistics skills, event photography, facilitation or training skills, graphic design, etc), the community need would be satisfied (the need to learn about healthy eating) and the young people would have actually offered a service through which they have also developed their competences.

Community service in a formal learning environment

Community service is a similar concept to service-learning, often overlapping. These are social, environmental, individual or group activities and its pedagogical processing carried out within an organized framework for the benefit of the learner’s local community, independent of financial interests, regulated by law. In Hungary, since 2016, in the period of graduation examinations immediately following the completion of high school, the condition for starting the graduation examinations is proof of completion of 50 hours of community service. The organization of the school community service in state, municipal, civil, church etc. institutions is the task of the high school, overseen by the responsible school headmaster. The class teacher / mentor can hold a maximum of 5 hours of preparatory sessions for the students and then a maximum of 5 hours of closing sessions.

Service Learning	Volunteering	Educational Activities
<p>= a project through which young people contribute to solving real issues and needs, while learning very specific elements and acquiring concrete and pre-planned skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on free will • unpaid activity • the learning is planned, addressed to the participants of the service-learning project, and a vital part of the method. 	<p>= action or activity performed by individuals (alone or in groups) for other people, the community and for the common good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on free will of getting involved • unpaid activity • learning occurs but it is usually not pre-planned or reflected upon. 	<p>= an activity that offers a learning experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • based on free will or school curricula • unpaid activity (usually) • the learning is planned • BUT the learning occurs simply through participation, and NOT through service for the community.

Transition from volunteering to service-learning

The transitions from volunteering or educational activity to service-learning can be performed by adding one or more of the following key elements: (1) content-related curriculum and (2) knowledge to the service of social needs. Also, an additional element that facilitates the transitions from volunteering or education activity to service-learning is the reflection component (i.e. the affective dimension of both learning and of the service) related to the service in connection to the curricular content.

The service-learning and volunteering concepts can be seen as very similar, especially since we are speaking about service-learning placed in a non-formal education setting, where it resembles a lot the volunteering process.

However, there are a few differences between the 2 approaches. In service-learning, the learning that happens to the young people involved is intended, planned and carefully reviewed. In volunteering activities, besides the community benefit and the (usually positive) effects on the beneficiaries, there is also learning that happens for the volunteers, but this is a side-effect, a bonus, and not a main aim of getting involved in volunteering.

Moreover, there is also a difference in how these activities are set up by their facilitators (youth workers, if in both cases those that get involved and provide service are young people). The service-learning model uses a 4-step approach with very specific elements and guidelines in each phase of the project, strongly empowering the young people to be co-creators of their project, to actively participate in each phase, and learn also from this management process, not just from delivering the service. In volunteering actions, most of the times the approach is different, volunteers come in to support a cause or provide a service, and they do this in a pre-existing setting, where beneficiaries are clear, their needs are known, and the method of intervention is also already established by the organization taking up this cause. So volunteers participate with their time, energy, skills and ideas to a project which is usually already set up, and is in need of the manpower to be carried out. This of course does not mean there are not also situations in which it is the volunteers of an organization that can observe a need, and start to create a project to solve it, taking initiative and seeing it through in all phases, yet, this is still more rare.

Also, in volunteering, there are different ways to involve volunteers – they take on different parts of a project or volunteering program, they contribute here and there, based on their availability and skills, and the program will be the result of their common involvement, each doing their smaller or larger part. In service-learning, once a group of young people decides on a project, they will be involved in it fully, from beginning to end, making it theirs.

Based on these differences, it is rather easy to transform a classic volunteering activity into a service-learning project, by planning it more thoroughly, and clearly setting from the beginning learning objectives for the youth involved, that can be developed or enhanced during the SL implementation. Then what needs to be added to a standard volunteering activity to make it a service-learning project is the structured approach – from preparation, to implementation, reflection and celebration – giving careful attention to each step and observing what this methodological approach gives as added value to the young people. Reflection and celebration are crucial for a service-learning project and you will discover details of how these are done, in the next chapters of this manual. This is not to say though, that in standard volunteering, reflection and celebration do not happen – in quality volunteering projects, these are also done as part of a professional volunteer management approach, linked with motivation and retention of volunteers.

However, in service-learning, these are integral elements of the methodology. These 2 steps build on the previous ones, and are the ones that can ensure a successful service-learning initiative, with visible effects for all those involved – both the community (beneficiaries and partner organization), and the young people – the main actors.

At the same time, also a service-learning activity can become a volunteering attempt, when the focus on learning is put on the side, and priority is given to the service element, to the impact generated in the community, the positive change which the young people will create through their action.

1.3. About service-learning in national contexts

Slovakian context

In Slovakia, service-learning for the educational practice in formal and non-formal education is a new and still almost unknown pedagogical strategy. In 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. The specificity of service-learning development in Slovakian conditions is its connection with education for volunteering and civic engagement. In April 2018, the Strategy for Education of Children and Youth for Volunteering in Slovakia (Konceptia výchovy a vzdelávania detí a mládeže k dobrovoľníctvu; 2018) was adopted by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport. This strategy views volunteering as a cross-sectional theme and a space for experiential learning based on the reflection of experience, and thus promulgates the view that children and young people should be led by pedagogues toward active participation, a proactive approach in solving societal problems, helping others through volunteer activities, but also toward inclusive behaviors and prosocial attitudes and values. The Strategy for Education of Children and Youth for Volunteering in Slovakia is based on service-learning pedagogy principles, and its goal is to create the prerequisites for the implementation of education for volunteering at all levels of education (including universities). The strategy and its introduction into practice should help volunteering become a natural part of lifestyles of people and communities in Slovakia, and thus connect education with real life. There is an educational opportunity for teachers about service-learning offered by PDCO, as well as available methodology for them. In youth organizations volunteering is part of non-formal education, but connecting the volunteer experience with the educational process, and reflection of this experience by young people is usually a very rare practice, so many volunteering activities of young people remain “only” an experience without explicitly specified educational goals.

Romanian context

Service-learning in Romania has been quite intensively promoted in and around the formal educational sector, thanks to the long-term investment of New Horizons Foundation in this concept and practice, within their IMPACT clubs program, ever since 2004. The Foundation established over 180 such clubs in schools in Romania. Although the club actions are done outside the scope of school studies, and they do not intentionally aim specific learning objectives included in the curriculum, the activities follow consistent non-formal learning processes, have clearly stated learning objectives, and are placed in the context of the local community with a strong emphasis on local impact. We could say the IMPACT clubs are a hybrid between community service and service-learning, bordering between non-formal education and school/youth community involvement. Teachers who lead IMPACT clubs might step in the shoes of youth workers, even if they are still anchored in their formal educational role. Service-learning was also approached by other NGOs between 2004-2008, when Pro Vobis started to explore the concept originating from the US, and then handed it over to its local counterpart – Cluj-Napoca Volunteer Center (CVCN). CVCN implemented a Service-learning pilot project, working with secondary-school pupils in the „Pupils for the Community“ project. It created and delivered an introductory training on Service-learning for other 8 local volunteer centers in Romania that implemented trial Service-learning actions in their communities. CVCN also generated a booklet on Service-learning – a small research on how it can be adapted to local schools’ reality.

On a national level, there have been attempts since 2003 to create a National Strategy for Community Action, implemented in high-schools, special schools, and placement centers. It functioned until 2007. Over 100.000 pupils were reported as volunteers in the 3 years of activity, and more than 1200 schools were involved. The program was considered successful, but never managed to become sustainable, or to expand to other types of schools. Since 2014, the volunteering law in Romania clearly states a minimum age for volunteering – that of 15 years old, thus leaving a lot of volunteering activities previously done in schools or proposed by teachers for their pupils, outside the legal volunteering framework. Pro Vobis started to promote the concept of education for volunteering, so as to ensure that groups of pupils getting involved in the community do not get discouraged to take action, and serve their communities in a structured manner. However, very few of these activities have clear learning objectives set as part of the school curriculum. In the higher education field, the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca has been involved in Erasmus+ projects in the past years, developing with other partners the service-learning concept among university students, studying how it can be implemented, and creating tools for teachers so they can lead service-learning activities (more details: www.slihe.eu).

Polish context

In Poland service-learning is an unknown pedagogical practice in formal and non-formal education. Although there are volunteer clubs in many schools, their coordinators are not familiar with service-learning methodology. Most often they organize short term volunteer actions, for example trash collection, or cleaning up in their surroundings. Pupils get easy tasks, and rarely work as a project team. There are few exceptions, e.g. the American School of Warsaw conducts service-learning projects to “develop the attributes of the IB learner profile by applying and extending their skills and knowledge in real-world contexts”. This school implements ideas which arise from individual or group initiatives, curriculum connections, or identified community needs. In non-governmental organizations, youth workers organize volunteering differently than at schools, but still without making use of the service-learning methodology. Usually there are specific tasks to do, and volunteers decide which of those they are interested in. Some youngsters connected to NGOs are involved in social projects moderated by youth workers, but in these cases they work on a project as a team, concentrating much more on the activity than the learning process. There is a lack of methodology in Poland to teach youngsters by social activism. Service-learning could be very useful in these areas, especially at schools and in NGOs.

Hungarian context

In Hungary the methodology of service-learning is little known in the educational sector. Elements used, and similarities can be found, implemented especially by secondary educational institutions, such as project-based education, practices of experimental pedagogy, and community service. In higher education it is yet to be introduced. The International Year of Volunteers in 2001 was an important year to catalyze the development of the youth sector as it increased cooperation between the educational field, various ministries and the NGOs, and paved the way for the recognition of non-formal education, and a law in Hungary on volunteering, as well as the creation of the National Volunteer Centre Foundation (Önkéntes Központ Alapítvány). In the early 2010's, with the adoption of the National Volunteer Strategy (NVS), a stronger emphasis was put on systematically developing social consciousness, and social skills of young people. For the last decade youth volunteering has been considered as a priority, which attitude is exemplified by the introduction of community service.

A somewhat similar idea to service-learning, it became obligatory to complete School Community Service for all secondary school students. In order to receive a high school diploma, students are required to do a 50 hours long service which ‘means social and environmental protection activity, as well as its educational processing, carried out individually or in group for the advantage of the local community of the student, which is carried out within organized framework and is independent of financial interests.’ (Act on Public Education). One of the main goals of School Community Service is to strengthen local communities, but its pedagogical goals also include developing active citizenship.

Obligatory School Community Service is closely related to volunteering, but it is a separate notion. ‘The concepts of community service and voluntary work do have certain things in common, in that they are both generally intended to serve the public good, they both bring benefits and greater value to the people carrying them out and to their environment - as by doing these activities, everybody acquires values which can reinforce an awareness of community commitment and a sense of responsibility - and additionally they can both bring advantages in later life or when looking for employment.’ (NVS, 2012 p. 3.) Religious and non-governmental civic organizations in Hungary are active in the fields of non-formal education and volunteering, often providing methodological training courses for educational and social professionals on these topics. Through these training courses, many concepts, similar to that of service-learning pedagogy, are being introduced to school community service and volunteer programmes.

Croatian context

The concept of service-learning, as a pedagogical methodology is not completely unknown in Croatia. In the formal system there is evidence that service-learning forms an integral part of some study programmes at the university level (i.e. constituents of University of Rijeka, University of Zagreb etc). In these cases service-learning is understood as a means of universities' third (civic) mission, and as a learning and teaching method. The situation in lower levels of formal education (elementary and secondary school) is a little bit different. Even though service-learning is not recognized as a concept implemented in the school system, there's a trend worth mentioning in elementary and especially secondary schools – the development and implementation

of school volunteering programmes (school volunteer clubs), as part of civic education as a cross-curricular topic. This practice can be interpreted as a method of preparing youth for an active role in the community, but also as a way of gaining valuable competencies that can be related to the school curriculum. Also, an important indicator of youth readiness, active engagement in the community, and of their need for experiential learning is the number of youth (15-30) volunteering in Croatia. Youth represent almost half of the volunteer population in Croatia (48% in 2019., Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy). Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Croatia that are cooperating closely, and are seen as a valuable and indispensable partner in service-learning programmes and school volunteer programmes, represent the largest number of volunteer involving organizations in Croatia (86% in 2019., Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy). Even though CSOs are not aimed at implementation of service-learning programmes on their own, their work, especially through their volunteer programmes, represents a logical way of connecting volunteering with learning and gaining competencies in a specific field. Many elements of service-learning methodology are being used in such volunteer programmes or other programmes aimed at non-formal learning. However, a more structured approach would be necessary to be able to gain the most out of the service-learning methodology.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Key elements of service-learning are reciprocity, youth leadership, learning, reflection
- We distinguish service-learning from volunteering, internship, educational activities in youth work and community service.
- There are possibilities for transitions from volunteering and educational activities to service-learning.
- There are different roots and contexts for service-learning, which need to be recognized when developing service-learning in specific country

2. Principles of service-learning in youth work

The term principle, which also has the synonymous meaning of “maxim”, is known in other languages in conjunction with other terms “regel” or “regola” (from the Latin “regula”), which can be translated as either “norm” or “rule.” A principle is that from which something comes or from which something is known about. In the most general sense, it is a maxim, a starting point, a leading idea, a basic rule of procedure, origin, the highest principle, an assumption, a basic idea. In terms of service-learning, however, the best legal aspect is where the principle is a standard to be followed because it will help to achieve a certain set standard and appropriate quality.

We can experience various situations when implementing service-learning projects. As part of the training, it is not possible to prepare a youth worker or a young person for all types of situations which may arise. However, the principles can help if we are not sure whether our activities are service-learning, or provide us with some guidance in the implementation of service-learning projects.

Principles of leading young people in a service-learning project

- Leadership of young people
- Pro-learning atmosphere
- Adult model
- Entertainment
- Recognition
- Inspiration by the examples of good practice
- Targeted motivation
- Respect for specific needs

Principles of creating the intention and content of the service-learning project

- Prioritization of needs over the Idea
- Work with the community/people, not for them
- Balance of benefits
- The long-term principle
- Growing demands
- Flexibility, diversity, and possibility of choice

Principles supporting the connection of educational goals with the goals of the service

- A clear connection of volunteer experience to the objectives and content of education
- Learning from one’s own experience
- Reflection of experience
- Cross-sectioning

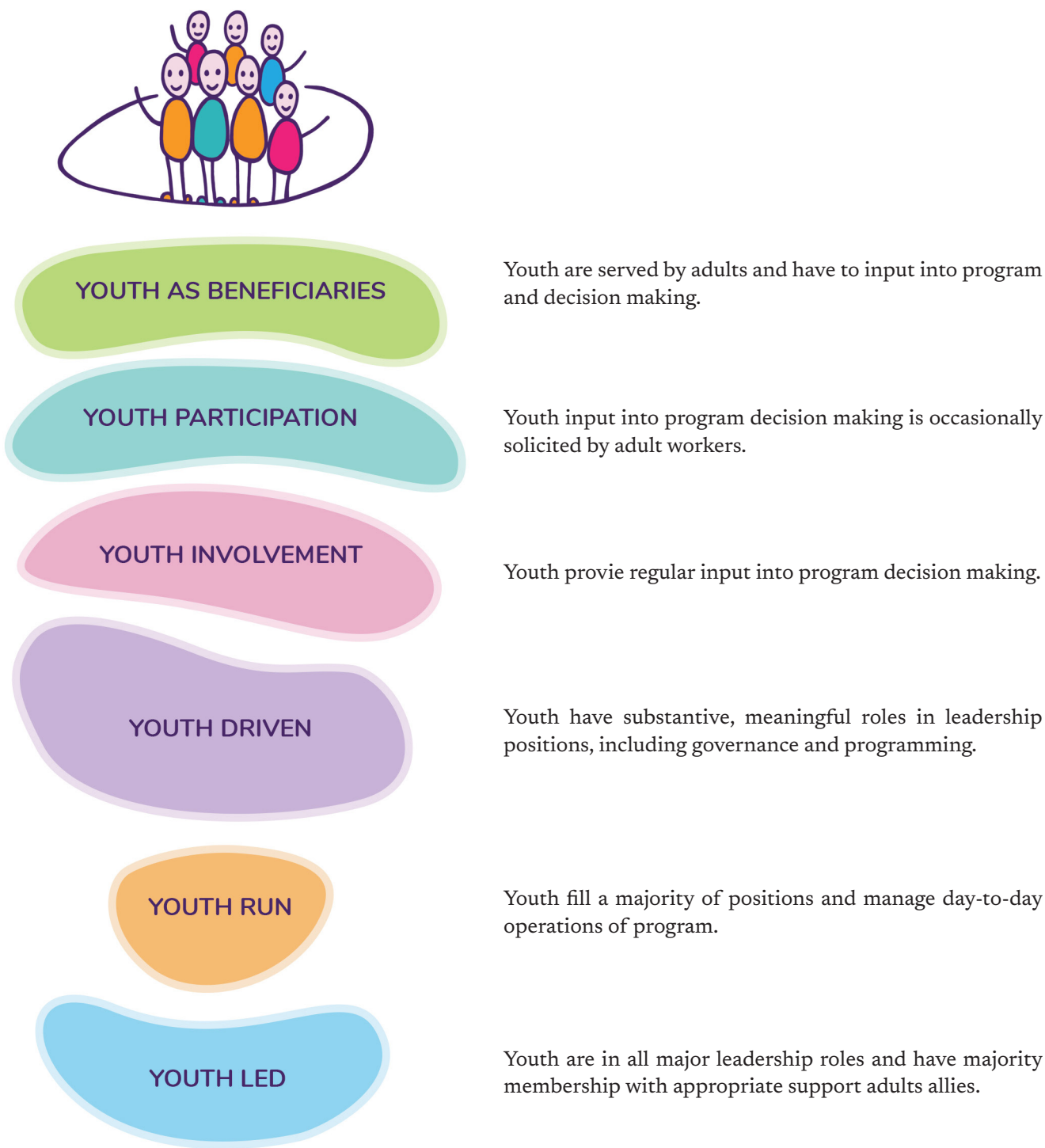
2.1. Principles of leading young people in a service-learning project

Leadership of young people

Youth-led volunteering is the vision that young people help to implement, manage and oversee development in their communities and wider society and play a major role in deciding how resources are allocated (Restless Development, 2016; Kahn et al., 2009). It is rooted in the belief that young people are valuable assets and resources, and that their energies and talents should and can be brought to the table.

Young people should be involved as much as possible in the planning, implementation and evaluation of service-learning. They should feel the ownership of the volunteer project / activity and be the leaders of the activities, not just the implementers. This requires the creation of room for opportunity and motivating leadership of the youth worker. It is about respecting the ideas and intentions of young people. If young people are personally involved in the preparation and implementation, they will also perceive greater responsibility for carrying out the tasks, because they designed them themselves. In practice, this turns out to be again a challenge for youth workers rather than for young people themselves. It is important not only to direct them, to listen to them, but also to let them lead. In professional publications, we find several tools that help to grasp the leadership of youth as a continuum with the spectrum of possibilities. We offer one of them in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Youth leadership spectrum



Source: Movement Strategy Center (2004)

According to the Movement Strategy Center (2004), a youth-led action is one in which the youth constituents decide what gets done and how it gets done. Youth led does not necessarily mean “no adult involvement or role.” Rather, “Youth led” is a specific relationship between youth and adults where the adults support the youth to gain the skills, information, and capacity to make decisions about the organizations in which they find themselves.

Adult model

The youth worker should be a role model in the implementation of service-learning projects and should carry out voluntary activities together with the youth. If a youth worker is not active, they cannot demand a high level of activity from young people. They should not be in the role of “superior”, but rather a “facilitator / guide” and help young people to participate. Their job is to arouse interest, which is one of the keys to success. The organization of the service-learning activity should be as *informal* as possible, it should create a relaxed environment in which volunteers feel welcome, respected and valued. They need some form of support and advice, but they do not need a “boss”. They will appreciate the person who helps them if they need it and will move them “further” along (to more complex work), if they are ready for it.

☺ *The youth organization was involved in helping out in a social services facility. They found that the facility needed help with the repair of outdoor areas so the beneficiaries could stay in the park. All the young people started the work assigned to them by the two leaders in the morning, but as time went on, they started laughing and whispering. Basically, the two leaders walked around all day with cameras in their hands and, in addition to the young volunteers, they took pictures of flowers, beetles and finished work.*

Pro-learning Atmosphere

One of the basic prerequisites and principles of service-learning is.. learning! In order to develop the interest for learning in youth, it has to be part of our organizational culture. Learning is a principle that guides us and is supported by every person that gets in contact with the young people.

Entertainment

Volunteering should bring joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction to the engaged young people. Volunteering offers space to solve an interesting task that has an individual meaning and social impact. Energy spent in a challenge where a young person is able to apply their own skills and knowledge for the benefit of another individual or group of people, is a source of inner fulfillment.

☺ *The benefits of volunteering are very often identified in various studies: “meeting new people”, “joy of life”, “fun”, “joy in spending one’s free time”, “reduction of anxiety and depression” and the like.*

Recognition

If the objective of volunteering is a long-term help to others and the community, then the reward is the most powerful satisfaction and motivation for future work and social engagement. The acquired experience recognized by the community is reflected in future deeds and relationships. It helps build self-awareness and self-confidence. Last but not least, recognition helps young people to become enthusiastic, initiative citizens as well as conscious and creative personalities.

☺ *Here is an example of an excerpt from the nomination of the award-winning project from the Heart in the Palm in the Young Volunteer under 30 category: “It is admirable and very inspiring how, from an early age, a boy only 11 years of age has shown such an intense interest in helping and making people and beneficiaries of social service facilities so happy. He also uses his gift of speech to tell his peers and the general public about the different types of activities of beneficiaries”.*

Inspiration by the examples of good practice

For the purpose of a good functioning and support of the service-learning projects, there is a need for an environment permitting a wide range of good and successful examples of volunteer projects and learning activities. It is important for these examples to be highly accessible to both coordinators and young people, and to use them within the implementation of projects. The system should also inspire different forms of volunteering - from one-time activities through various forms of short-term activities to long-term forms of volunteering.

Targeted motivation

Young people may lose motivation, so it is advisable to encourage them regularly, to be more in touch with them, but also to offer them informal and formal recognition of the benefits of their volunteer activity (whether in the form of affirmation, certificates or job recommendations). Motivators (external stimuli, phenomena or events that have the ability to arouse or satisfy needs) are important especially in competition with other pressures, and attractions in how to use one's leisure time. For young volunteers, in the absence of money, it is equally important to cover the costs associated with volunteering (transport, travel, meals etc.). Read more about how to prevent young people losing motivation and drop-out in service-learning projects at the end of this chapter.

- ☺ *Forms of motivation through devoting time to young people have proved their worth in a youth organization: regular face-to-face meetings, social networking groups, blogs and vlogs about young people's activities, encouragement during the implementation process, expressing support for young people by workers or other people on the activities they are involved in. Through the recognition and promotion of their activities: regular information on volunteering activities on the organization's website, nominations for awards through regional and national awards, provision of validation of volunteering, skills acquired and developed, provide volunteers with recommendations not only for university admissions, but also when looking for a job, during study stays abroad, etc.*

Respect for specific needs

In case young people with special needs are involved, their needs and social situation has to be taken into consideration (time-demand, attendance, accessibility, or need for assistance) when engaging in volunteering. It is good to know their potential and use what young people can help or excel in and entrust them with tasks in which they will succeed.

- ☺ *The young people had decided to organize a charity sale at a stall at the Christmas Markets in order to obtain funding for the opportunity to continue volunteering at the low-threshold centre. The task of the young people was to produce interesting Christmas decorations and ornaments during the creative activities at the youth meetings. Everyone was very happy with the activity, only Karol, who was in a wheelchair and had trouble holding anything in his hand, did not feel involved. However, his friend Peťo noticed this and asked him what he would like to do for the sale. Karol loved to talk and so he wanted to sell things at the stall. And so, the young people divided the services among themselves, so that there was always someone at the stall with Karol, and he could hand over the products and receive the payment. They also made a pallet for him to be on, so he could be seen in the stall behind the counter.*

2.2. Principles of creating the intention and content of the service-learning project

Prioritization of needs over the idea

Before initiating the planning and implementation of volunteer activity by it is necessary to critically assess whether the activity is currently appropriate, necessary, and useful in terms of the needs of the society, the community or other circumstances in which they want to implement it and whether its implementation is a priority over other ideas or potentially necessary activities. The current need should prevail over the idea, however good it may be. It is not appropriate to perform volunteer activities without considering their suitability just for the sake of the activities themselves but on the contrary, it is recommended to carry out those activities that are actually beneficial in the given context.

- ☺ *Some young people thought that they would organize a collection for toys for children living in children's homes before the Christmas period. They collected a really large amount, especially cuddly toys. After a moment of enthusiasm, however, there was a moment of anguish. After carrying out the collection, they found out that they had no one to give the toys to, because there was no interest in them. When they visited the orphanage and the crisis centre, they found that the children had completely different needs than cuddly toys.*

Work with the community/people, not for them

When planning and implementing volunteer activities, you need to build on a horizontal model of delivering help, in which the young people are taught not only to provide help but to respect the fact that both parties in the process of help should be active change-makers. Target groups involved in volunteering should be also involved in planning and delivering help.

- ⊗ *A frequent activity that we encounter in practice is visits by youth groups in facilities for the elderly during October – the month of respect for the elderly. Young people prepare some performances, songs, gifts and come to the facility with them. It is an activity that makes the time in the facility more pleasant for the people in the facility, but it is questionable to what extent it really responds to their needs. What do young people learn by doing this type of activity? They are active and come to passive recipients of aid. However, there are often people in the facilities who can teach something to the other party, due to which very stimulating intergenerational service-learning activities can arise.*

The long-term principle

The education of youth can be implemented through different types of activities but should provide space for a transition from short-term activities to long-term and more systematic volunteering service. Through education for volunteering, young people should be encouraged to continue in their activities even beyond one particular project. For the purpose of achieving the actual educational impact of the activities, it is necessary to organize them on a long-term and regular basis.

Growing demands

Participating in volunteering gives young people the opportunity to constantly grow and progress. In the implementation of service-learning, this creates room for opportunity for a gradual increase in demands in the implementation of volunteer activities with the intention of developing a wider range of knowledge, skills and attitudes of children and youth. Walking dogs in a shelter, or cleaning up rubbish from forests can be nice as a first experience, but with young people it is good to go to the “root of the matter”. Discussions before and after the activities should gradually lead to the young people naming those problems and needs which lead to a mess in the forest, and so many dogs in the shelter. What can be done, so that people do not drop rubbish in the forest? What about doing something, so there are not so many abandoned dogs in the shelters? Volunteering will thus become creative, developmental and fun, as young people are given the room to engage, seek and find meaning and motivation in their activities. You may be surprised at the solutions young people come up with.

- ⊗ *For many years, Janka has been a volunteer in a scout-type organization, where as a counselor she prepares games for children. When asked to join volunteering by the leader, she thought it would be good to make 2 games for younger groups during the summer camp. After all, she has a lot of experience, and even has some games and activities prepared from meetings. She had done this at the camps two years before, and her games with children have always been a great success. Janka’s games are successful, but she’s not moving forward in anything. Maybe it would be more beneficial for her if she tried to coordinate a team of counselors with whom she could have prepared a more comprehensive program.*

Balance of benefits

Each volunteer activity has benefits for many interested parties. In service-learning it is necessary to reflect that through voluntary activities, children and young people influence the society, help solve problems or fulfill diverse needs, and promote the building of solidarity. On the other hand, it is also important to point out what are the benefits of such activities for young people themselves. Volunteering allows young people to learn through direct experience and volunteering can be beneficial for their further personal and professional development. If we combine volunteering with the process of education and training, for example in the scope of our youth organization, then this experience should lead not only to the performance of some activities, but also to a deeper perception of social needs and problems, awareness of responsibility for solving them and active commitment to change.

Flexibility, diversity, and possibility of choice

Diversity and flexibility need to be maintained in the type of volunteering activities, but also in the “depth” of commitment, level of responsibility, time frame or preference for individual or group forms of volunteering. Young people should have the room to contribute their ideas, while having the choice and being able to choose freely. We consider this principle to be especially important if you decide to carry out volunteer activities as part of an educational plan or the basic educational programme of the organization. In order to maintain the principle of volunteering and free choice, it is necessary to leave young people room for decision-making and choice. You can pass on different experiences to young people, but the final decision on how they will continue to volunteer

is up to them. When planning to mediate your first volunteering experience for young people, consider its level, so as not to discourage them in the beginning. For example, meetings with children from a children's home, with people with disabilities, or with homeless people should be preceded by discussions about a specific approach to these people.

- ☺ *The leader of the group decided to involve all young people in volunteering. However, the young people could choose or suggest activities that they would like to implement. In the beginning, however, they set out the basic rules that applied to everyone.*

2.3. Principles supporting the connection of educational goals with the goals of the service

The Clear Connection of Volunteer Experience to the Objectives and Content of Education

The volunteer experience of children and young people must be explicitly connected to the objectives and content of education. When planning activities, it is the role of the coordinator/youth worker to plan what specific knowledge and skills can be gained through them.

- ☺ *A youth organization focused on the development of multimedia skills was looking for young people who would, for its needs, create for free a podcast about its activities. During the recruitment, young people who did not have much experience with this activity contacted them. Since they had no choice, they also took on the less experienced. At the end of the work with the young volunteers, they thanked them and, in recognition, put their names in the end credits. After completing the podcast, the youth organization had a beautiful podcast, but the young volunteers moved on to another organization.*

If we want volunteering to be an educational experience, it must be clear what we want to teach young people or what they should develop in. It is necessary to set goals explicitly also because in connection with them we subsequently reflect the volunteer experience. In reality, the same volunteer experience can lead to the achievement of different educational goals.

- ☺ *A youth organization was involved in a survey of the living situation of young people during quarantine measures related to COVID-19. Since it needed to process the data obtained, it decided to look for young volunteers who had applied for doctoral studies, because in addition to the goal of grouping the data obtained, it also aimed to teach young people to transform the answers obtained into quantitative data. Therefore, in the recruitment of volunteers, the organization stated not only the profile but also the need for the help and also the educational goal.*

Learning from one's own experience

Activity or rather to say one's own experience plays the primary role in the learning process and the creation of positive habits. Theory is secondary to direct experience. Learning from one's own experience plays an indispensable role in the process of education for volunteering. They seek out and appreciate experience that is not commonly available to them, or that fully meets their needs such as art, fashion, environmental activities, information and communication technologies, etc. In practice, one's own experience does not always mean only a successfully implemented activity or project. We also learn from negative experiences, so there is no need to be afraid when something fails to be realized as we planned. It is important to talk openly with young people, to look at the reasons for failure, and to draw conclusions, so that it does not happen again.

- ☺ *After working together for a long time on a service-learning project, a group of young people found out that all the members of the group were not participating equally in the activities, and that everyone also had different ideas about how the activities should be implemented. The conflict between them escalated so much that one of them stopped communicating with the team completely. As one of the educational goals was to learn to work in a team, reflection and joint communication with a youth worker were focused on the analysis of these conflicts and preconditions for cooperation. In the end, the project was completed, even though the cooperation was not ideal right up to the end. However, in the final reflection, the young people positively perceived how much they had learned about teamwork, team leadership, and delegation of tasks.*

Reflection of Experience

Reflection in the processes of training in volunteering can be imagined as the processing of experience from a specific activity and its implementation into experience applicable in the future. In this context, the reflection of experience is a necessary condition so that young people develop and form their attitudes. The reflection serves as a retrospective look at volunteer work as both in terms of the scope of work and the personal experience. It is important to do the reflection together with young people on a continuous basis. In the case of one-off events the reflection should be done once they are finished. However, it is very important, so the coordinators should not forget about it.

Cross-sectioning

The basic principles of volunteering include diversity. The training and education of children and youth in volunteering can thus overlap with education areas as a cross-sectional theme. By involving young people in service-learning activities we offer them the opportunity to develop knowledge and abilities in specific fields, but we also facilitate interdisciplinary connections in what they are learning.

☺ *In a service-learning project implemented by a youth organization focused on the development of young people's participation in local politics, youth workers combined the following goals: development of participatory skills, increasing young people's engagement in participation, and increasing the number of young people involved in a service-learning project. The young people first developed communication skills in front of formal authorities, then teamed up with the local city council and young people from a low-threshold centre. Together with the young people from the low-threshold centre, they prepared a presentation on the needs of young people from the low-threshold centre for one of the sessions of the city council.*

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- There are several principles which need to be reflected and respected in planning and implementing service-learning projects.
- Principles can help if we are not sure whether our activities are service-learning, or provide us with some guidance in the implementation of service-learning projects.

3. Motivation – managing the risks of dropout from service-learning project

Since service-learning (SL) entered practice, there have been several projects implemented from which experiences could have been drawn. One of the learnings is that even in cases of well-designed, successful, and popular SL projects, we find a noticeable percentage of the participants abandoning the project before it gets finished, or despite their presence their motivation or contribution becomes insufficient, influencing the ambient and the success of the project.

This phenomenon is not unprecedented, it has been observed in various other fields like work, studies, or volunteering. As the world gets more and more dynamic and options become broader, young people would like to experience as much as possible. It means that they are changing the scope of their activities more often, trying to live 'yolo' ('you only live once') style, feeling that they should predominantly do things that are enjoyable or exciting. This tendency is a given external factor that is not within our reach to be changed, as youth workers and SL project coordinators might not have an impact on the "draining" factors that are coming from the outside world. However, this does not mean that this issue should be overlooked. Youth workers do have a major influence on the internal factors that can keep the participants engaged and active in an SL project. The objective must be to create a project environment that is attractive for the participants and satisfies their needs.

To be able to find the right solutions there is a need to find the factors that could make participants abandon the projects. This means that there is no general solution against dropout, but actions have to be taken tailor-made to the young person or target group, taking into account the individual needs. The keyword here is "motivation".

What is motivation?

Motivation is the act or process of giving someone a reason for doing something or the condition of being eager to act or work (Webster Dictionary). Motivation can be already possessed or it can be given or received. Either way, what exactly the "reason" is that needs to be possessed or given/received is rather personal to each individual.

If youth workers would like to analyze motivation, it is useful to understand two types of it: extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation. While extrinsic motivation involves completing a task or exhibiting a behavior because of outside causes such as avoiding punishment or receiving a reward, intrinsic motivation involves performing a task because it is personally rewarding. In general, it can be stated that the older a person gets the more they will find intrinsic motivations more attractive. That is why in the field of SL the youth workers and those who are in a leadership role in an SL project (e.g. a young person) need to focus on each participant's inner motivation and avoid punishment and direct rewarding in the long run.

How to find out what the right motivation for a person could be?

Seems to be obvious to say that the project owners need to find this out by talking to the participants, regularly asking them about their own motivation, inspirations and goals. This should be done at the first phase of each project with frequent updates and feedback given through reflection at each part of a project. On the other hand, in practice, this is not always the case. It can happen that youth workers might lack the time or have other reasons why enough attention is not given to this matter, and there is a problem of not enough communication with the youngsters about their motivation. Another typical situation can be that the youngsters are being asked but they are not able to clearly identify their motivation(s) as it requires a certain level of self-awareness. They might also find it embarrassing or too intimate to share what would keep them enthusiastic in front of peers or the youth worker. In this case, the youth workers need to ask them the right questions and coach the participants to acquire the necessary self-knowledge to find out why they are there, and what they want to get from the experience, ideally referring back to what was discussed in the planning phase of the project.

It is also a very common mistake to assume that all the participants share the same enthusiasm that they do or take it for granted that the youngster's main motivation is always to do something good for the target community of the SL project. For example, if the project's target community is underprivileged children, then it should not be assumed that helping them is the main motivation for all the youngsters participating. In reality, it might be one of the motivations, but there could be various other reasons for them to join the project such as gaining

work experience, spending time with friends, completing obligatory school service, impressing peers or parents, or the place having a convenient location for them.

Potential reasons for dropout and how to prevent them

It must be emphasized again that each participant enters the SL project with a different set of motivational factors. In an ideal case, the participants' expectations are rational, and if they are, they need to be satisfied to a decent extent, otherwise the probability of dropout increases. For instance, there are participants who are joining mostly for personal growth, others might decide to join for the sake of the company/friends while for some youngsters the objective of the project, the impact they can make with their work is the main drive for participation. It's also important to mention that these sets of personal motivational factors can change throughout the project, as well as external factors having an impact on them. For example, before the COVID19 pandemic, many projects that were planned offline had to 'move' online, changing not only the environment in which young people worked and the way of communication between them but affecting the overall experience. Youth workers need to adapt to these changes, consider and list possible consequences when thinking about how to increase the dropping rates of motivation. Although there can be infinite variations of motivational factors, there are certain typical reasons for dropout. In the following, these will be examined one by one and provided a solution for each in order to be able to prevent the dropout of young people from SL projects. Best practices will be also discussed. It might be tempting to get through the possible reasons in a form of a "top list", so from the less common to the most common causes, but apart from not having the necessary data about their prevalence, the intention is not to suggest in any way that there are less important factors. All participants experiencing doubts about their role in an SL project need to be taken seriously because for the participant it does not matter whether their motivation is "typical" or not.

#Social matters

It is very common, especially in the case of young people for whom peer relations are extremely important, that participants join a project due to their need for more social interactions. In recent years the number of offline interactions decreased significantly, with children and adolescents spending their time increasingly in cyberspace. They need new platforms to be able to socialize and have in-person connectivity experiences, therefore many participants choose to take part in an SL project in the hope of getting to know new people and broadening their social network. If for some reason this does not happen, they will most probably lose their motivation.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

First of all, during the planning of the SL project, it must be ensured that enough opportunities for the youngsters to socialize are offered. Especially at the beginning of the project, the youth workers should not expect that the youngsters will organize team-building events for themselves entirely alone. It is advised to take the initiative and organize informal meetups, or suggest organizing those to older and more experienced youth leaders, supporting them in planning useful gatherings that are also fun. Special needs should also be given special attention, so the timing, the location, the accessibility and the program are all fitting to the participants' needs. As youth experts, supporting adults have the knowledge and experience to oversee that while the social element is ensured, group building is designed in a way that includes vulnerable participants. For example, more introverted youngsters do have the desire to socialize, but for some, it might be sufficient to be in the company of peers, and they do not necessarily wish to expose themselves or be in the reflector light during meetings. In fact, being overexposed in order to prompt the group bending might lead to some youngsters feeling uncomfortable and wishing to leave, and not because they do not want to share time with the group.

It is also a crucial condition to have a critical mass on the team meetups, a minimum number of participants depending on the particular project, who can connect to each other. It does not mean that an SL project should not be launched if the number of participants is relatively low, however, if there are only 3 people participating carrying out all tasks, and their main motivation is to socialize, then it is the youth workers' responsibility to try include in the project as many opportunities as possible for the youngsters to make social connections. Also, if there are 30 participants but only a few attending the meetings, it can feel very demotivating to the few that are scrupulously present, suggesting the need to re-establish or strengthen group rules.

It might sound somehow old-fashioned to mention, however, it is in general still relevant that the male-female ratio, together with the age-range need to be kept in mind. According to youngsters' age and cultural background, some would prefer to have all-girls or all-boys groups, while in general, it can be beneficial for group dynamics

to have a balance. Similarly, if there are only older teenagers in the group with only one younger child, it can lead to challenges, maybe not regarding tasks but rather to the ways young people prefer to socialize. When it sticks out that the desired balance in membership is missing, it needs to be addressed. Youth workers and young people can try to find a solution together, for example through further advertisement, allowing members to join later or forming smaller sub-groups within the team.

Cultural, socio-cultural, and linguistic differences

Even the most enthusiastic participant can get demotivated if they experience barriers to connecting to other youngsters in the SL project. These barriers can have various roots but the most common are linguistic, cultural, or socio-cultural. Most commonly the person who feels inferior in a situation (for example due to difficulties in finding a common language with the others, or not having enough money to pay in informal social events/group activities) will be the one dropping out of the project.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

It is the responsibility of the youth workers to spot the barriers and try to have them removed as much as possible. When the group members or youth leaders are more experienced, there is a chance it can be discussed together too. Of course, the linguistic, cultural and socio-cultural differences will not disappear miraculously, but an environment can be created where these differences are not significant or matter much less. For example, in the case of a person who does not speak any language that is spoken by the rest of the team, and tends to feel excluded from the group, measures need to be taken to integrate them by giving tasks within the project where no language skills are required, recommend translator applications that can help, assign a person who can translate or even teach them the common language, or introduce more non-verbal activities. If the barrier originates from different socio-cultural backgrounds it is also within the competence zone of the youth worker to spot it and help the participant not to feel inferior. SL projects are a great opportunity to have these barriers removed by grouping youngsters with different backgrounds together to work on the same tasks, but rules need to be discussed and established in order to ensure everyone feels equal. For example, if someone cannot participate in activities on certain days, cannot go to certain places or cannot touch/eat particular animals because of their religion or cultural context, it has to be addressed transparently, so adequate rules can be created within the group, or at least the absence of the person is understood when an activity cannot be rescheduled. These differences can offer an extra opportunity for learning and personal development is not ignored, but there might be a need for the youth worker to make the first step to creating an environment to disclose and discuss these differences. Also, there might be other sensible distinctions between participants they do not want to talk about like low economical resources or the level to which parents allow them to move freely. These should not be disclosed without their permission but rather discussed with them to reach a reasonable working solution.

Too much control vs. lack of mentoring

It is also a very common reason for becoming demotivated that the level of mentoring is not adequate. If there are not enough mentoring and reflection opportunities provided by the youth workers, the youngsters will probably feel left alone, and they might think that their input is not important. As one of the principles of SL is to empower youth in leadership roles, it would be reasonable to let them take responsibility for their own decisions, but it does not mean that they should be left with minimal or no mentoring at all. Adults working with them should be clear about what can be expected from them, give exact time scales of being reachable and plan and communicate mentoring and reflection occasions in advance.

As much as it is demotivating to work without sufficient support and supervision, too much control can also cause demotivation and dropout, especially if in the project there are ambitious, individualistic youngsters, who can come up with their own ideas and have the potential to take initiative. For these people, the youth workers need to create an environment where they can live up to their potential under the necessary level of control.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

Those who are responsible for leadership need to ask for regular feedback on this question. It is not easy to realize just by self-review that the level of mentoring is inadequate. By organizing regular meetings, asking team members informally online and offline, monitoring and personal feedback/reflection sessions, the youth workers can ensure that the youngsters feel their contribution and opinion is important, so they stay motivated.

If the level of control turns out to be too high: since the beginning of the project, it is recommended to keep the decision making as democratic as possible to a reasonable extent. It is almost never an advisable strategy to give direct instructions. If it is inevitable, the youth worker should offer at least two options for the participants from which they can choose, and explain the reasons behind the limited possibilities clearly and honestly. The power of choice will increase engagement. At the same time, participants need to be encouraged to come up with new ideas and take ownership of their initiatives, while feeling they will receive support to go through, and will not be stigmatized in case they fail.

The attractivity of certain activities

Each project has its creative/planning stage where most decisions need to be made, and there is space and time for discussions and ideas. In an ideal case, youngsters can agree on a project plan, dividing the tasks within each other. Nevertheless, it does not mean that during the project the division of duties and responsibilities should never change. Even in an optimal case, there will be tasks that are less challenging or less attractive for the participants but still need to be done. It can also happen that a task that looked interesting or boring turns out to be otherwise. For instance, the tasks related to cleaning or administration are typically of less attractiveness. Of course, there can always be someone who is eager to carry out these duties but if they need to be done repetitively it might as well decrease their motivation too. Even in the case of complex and attractive tasks, it can happen that the responsible person feels that it is not satisfying anymore, or becomes too challenging.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

Youth workers together with youth leaders need to constantly monitor how satisfied the participants are with their responsibilities. If it becomes necessary, they need to support the restructuring of the task division. This does not mean that someone should not comply with their duties just because they are not satisfied enough. It simply means that sometimes it is beneficial to reshuffle the cards a little bit and swap roles between participants. This can also support the educational objectives of the project as more youngsters get insight into different areas where they can develop their skills. It is also recommended to improve an unattractive task by making it more attractive based on the ideas of those who are in charge of it. If there is no way to make it more attractive, extrinsic motivation can also be used, such as giving extra compliments, material or other rewards to the responsible person. And at last, if a duty gets impossibly challenging, helpers need to be assigned or dropping the task needs to be considered.

Invisible objectives behind what and how things are done

The nature of the SL process determines that the youngsters work together as a team to set the SL objectives and implement the project. This means that in theory, all project members should know what tasks need to be performed, how and what is the purpose behind them. Despite this, in practice, it is not unlikely that not everyone agrees to the extent of the “what” and the “how” of the project. It can also occur that as the team proceeds with the project, some original plans are changed and additional activities are added. These factors can lead to situations in which not everyone is aware of why exactly certain activities are performed or they simply disagree with the way they are being carried out. Both situations can cause motivational problems and can lead to dropout. This phenomenon is similar to that of some instances in adult professional life when employees are not completely aware of the meaning of their tasks, they just do them for example because their boss told them to do so, or because they learnt not to ask.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

It is the responsibility of the youth workers and all the project members (including the project partner) to avoid this situation by continuously communicating about the ways of performing tasks and continuously challenging them to find out if there is a better way to achieve the goals set. Even if there is enough emphasis on communication, there will always be knowledge gaps or questions, therefore the youth workers and project members in leadership roles need to be approachable for the others. They need to show openness for new suggestions and they need to be ready to explain why certain things are done, and if necessary change certain practices. Regular reflection occasions and directed questions can help to reveal this problem and help to facilitate team members in realizing what the objectives are and why these are important to be reached in a certain way.

What will I benefit from all this?

An SL project has much to offer for the youngsters participating in it, with its two 'pillars'. One of them is the service itself and the other one is the learning part, which makes it obvious that the participants apart from serving and getting to know the chosen community/project partner will benefit from the project by developing their general and specific competencies. It is a matter of each participant's personal preference which one is given more emphasis. It can be declared that those youngsters who consciously choose SL instead of "simple" volunteering or school tasks of different nature have in a way expressed an explicit need for personal growth already. Ideally, the youth workers and the youngsters set realistic learning objectives and service goals in order to go along a designated path in the planning phase. Nevertheless, it is very common that later, when the project is already running, youngsters ask themselves questions like "what do I benefit from this?" or "is it worth my time and energy?". If their answer for these questions is a "not too much" and a "probably not" or "I'm not sure" then it is very likely that they will not stay engaged and drop out eventually.

What can be done to prevent dropout?

Apart from the educational benefits, SL can offer a lot of different gains for young people like new friendships, an extended social network, insight into new fields and so on. It is the responsibility of the youth workers to facilitate the clarification of the relevant benefits of the project, already at the beginning of the planning phase. During the project, these benefits should be named again and articulated frequently without exaggeration. Reminding the participants about why they decided to take part, highlighting the service and learning objectives they wanted to focus on will reinforce the feeling that apart from their contribution to others, their participation can be highly beneficial for them too.

Key conclusion of the chapter

Topic	Factors	Good practice to avoid dropout
Social matters	Not enough opportunity for social interactions	During planning ensure that the project will offer enough opportunities to socialize
		Organize meetups
		Pay attention to the male-female ratio
Cultural, socio-cultural, and linguistic differences	Barriers caused by linguistic, cultural and socio-cultural backgrounds	Create an environment where differences matter less
		Find a translator for someone with language issues
		Re-grouping youngsters
Too much control vs. lack of mentoring	Lack of mentoring	Help to organize regular meetings, reflection opportunities, monitor and have individual feedback sessions
	Too much control	Keep the decision making process democratic
		Encourage new ideas, do not stigmatize failure
The attractiveness of certain activities	Unattractive tasks	Swap between participants, improve task by asking feedbacks
	Task gets boring after a while	Swap between participants
	A task is too challenging	Assign helpers, consider dropping the task
Visible goals behind what and how the project is done	Participant not understanding the reason behind a task	Be approachable and explain, reinforce commitment at the beginning of the project
	Participant not agreeing on the way a task is being performed	Ask for suggestions for improvement
What will I benefit from all this?	The participant not seeing the advantages of participation	Clarify at the beginning the benefits that the project can provide
		These benefits should be named again and articulated frequently during each phase

4. Service-learning as a process

The service-learning process consists of 4 main steps linked by reflection, communication, promotion and monitoring.



Planning and preparation

The starting point is to identify a need or problem of the local community which the project will address. It is essential that the activity undertaken is sensible, and contributes to the development of project participants' competences, as well as supports the local community wisely. In other words, in this step it is crucial to find out what the needs of the local community are, and how the youngsters implementing the project can respond to them. At this stage the objective of learning and service should be also defined. The type of project activities should be planned in consultation with people who know the topic and the needs of the group you want to work for, or directly with representatives of the local community. Once the topic and scope of the project are identified, it is time to move on to the preparation of the activity. Depending on what kind of project the group is going to implement, they have to plan slightly differently, but the planning will always involve: the definition of tasks and their distribution, communication in the group, preparation of the project schedule, and budget planning. The participants may also need to get some extra training in specific issues - gain specific knowledge or develop certain skills.

To follow and manage all the tasks and data of a SL project is not a simple task. To be able to keep a track of the activities, to do's and deadlines you can use free project management tools such as Trello that is great for visually managing projects. Asana is useful to manage teams, Wrike has spreadsheet-like features as well as ClickUp. However, if you decide to make your SL project easy to follow you find plenty of free project management software on the internet to help you start managing projects right away. These tools are also helpful to compare plans to realized activities and produce data for monitoring and evaluation.

Implementation

The next step is the actual activity youngsters have prepared for. Sometimes, the activity itself takes less time than the preparation. It depends on the types of the activities. Longer commitment is advisable, service-learning projects should be sustainable in the long-term. When the activity is recurrent, there will also be time to reflect on it between individual events, discuss the learning process and emerging difficulties, look for solutions and introduce any modifications.

Evaluation

Once youngsters have completed the activity, it is necessary to discuss it, summarize it, draw conclusions for the future, and analyze the service and the learning process in the context of the whole group and each participant. This is an important stage of reflection on the project, because you can look at it in a broader perspective: Did the preparation process match the implementation of the activities? Is the problem solved? Or was the support provided only accidental? Would it make sense to repeat the activity in the future? Would it require any modification or perhaps a complete change? etc.

Celebration and closure

This is a very important stage, which, unfortunately, sometimes happens to be forgotten. Make sure you plan a type of meeting or trip that will conclude the whole process, and give you the opportunity to show and appreciate your participants' achievements. Let young people take pride in what they have done!

Reflection

Reflection is considered a key "ingredient" that transforms experience from SL activity into learning, it has a vital role in awareness-building and transforms service-learning into critical pedagogy, with a potential to determine personal transformation and social change (Jacoby, 2015).

Communication and promotion

Communication is a continuous process among the participants in the project, with the institution, with community partners, and with the community. An optimal service-learning project involves creating effective communication channels between the participants in the project and between participants and the community. This serves to spread the information, attract higher participation, raise awareness of problem areas on which the project is developed, and extend activities and accomplishments. Communication promotes additional learning and allows us to make the invisible visible: specific learning regarding communication processes, the visibility of the project and the community engagement of youth (Regina, Ferrara 2017).

Monitoring

Keeping an ongoing monitoring of the project is an often overlooked aspect of a quality service-learning experience. Monitoring the learning and actions taken throughout the project, as opposed to after the project is completed, provides valuable information for the reflection processes, for evaluation as well as for the promotion of the project.

Roles and responsibilities

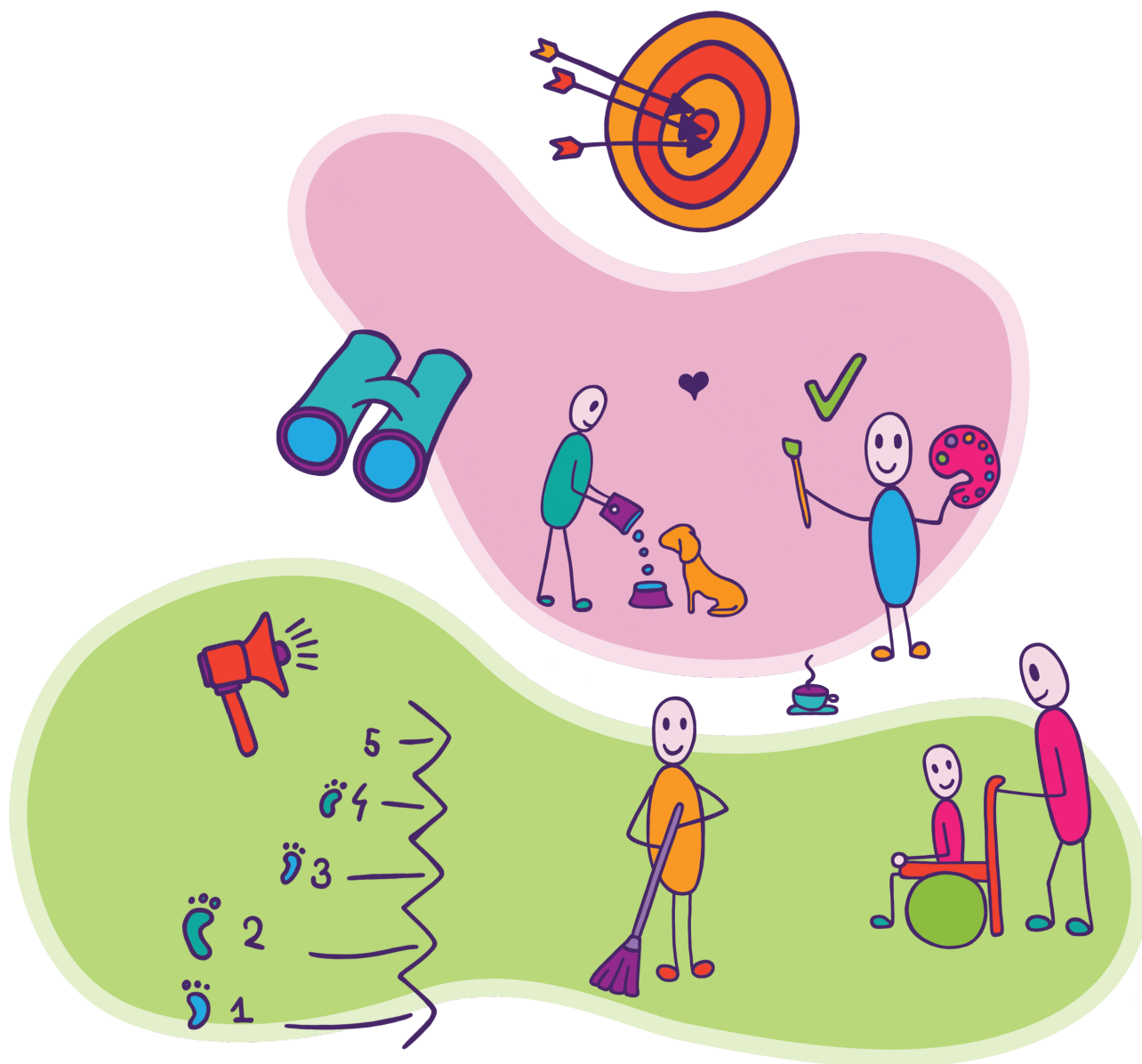
It is very important that all the tasks in the project are clear - everyone should know what they are responsible for. The youth worker helps young people to make decisions about the areas of their involvement, which should correspond with what the individuals want to learn, but also be undertaken in a way that guarantees success of the project. Young people who want to work on their weaknesses by engaging in activities that may be difficult for them, should get sufficient support from the youth worker and other participants. A project activity is usually a team activity, but responsibility for specific tasks cannot be diffused.

The service-learning process is supported by a youth worker, who helps young people to decide about their educational goals and their involvement in the project, who takes care of the whole project (all the steps), points out the risks without giving solutions, asks proper questions, and helps youngsters to think about themselves. The role of the youth worker is to regularly discuss with young people everything that goes on within the project as it proceeds (at each stage!), and stimulate them to reflect on the learning process. This reflection should

embrace four dimensions: the problem (to which the project responds), the project's target group, the participants implementing the project, and the activities within which the project is implemented. The youth worker's task is to ensure that during meetings with project participants none of these areas are left out.

Examples of roles of young people in a service-learning project:

- Leader - this role should be performed by one of the participants, it is also possible to change the leader during the project (e.g. one participant can lead planning and preparation and another one all the other steps), and tutor should support that person,
- Person responsible for contacting the local community/its representative,
- Person responsible for expenses and budget management,
- Person responsible for recruitment/invitations to project events etc.,
- Person responsible for equipment, tools,
- Person responsible for venues/bookings etc.



A detailed example of a small project implementation using service-learning methodology:

Organization of a ball for children having hearing loss

Rafał, a young person who has hearing loss, is one of the participants of a group of six. He is planning social activities, supported by the Robinson Crusoe Foundation. He came up with an idea to implement a project for children with hearing loss from the area. The group found this idea interesting and decided to benefit from Rafał's knowledge of this community in the city, and his contacts, especially the primary school where kids with hearing loss study. At the very beginning, the group also agreed to communicate with each other via group chat in Messenger, created specifically for this project.

Rafał arranged a group meeting with the school principal, to check what they could do for the children. It was their first project, so they planned a one-time event. The group discussed a few ideas with the principal, and agreed to decide on a type of involvement in one week. The school principal appointed a contact person from the school, with whom the group was to consult the plan and fix the date. The project group also selected a contact person – Dominika, a pedagogy student, who wanted to learn new methods in working with children having hearing loss.

Volunteers knew that Rafał, despite his loss of hearing, likes to dance and have fun at discos, so they agreed to organize a carnival ball. It was approved by the school. The group worked together to plan the ball, and invented games using Rafał's knowledge of the needs of their target group. Dominika wrote down proposals, and consulted with the contact person from the school. When this stage of activities came to an end, i.e. when the school accepted the proposals, the group developed a schedule of activities, and listed all the tasks that had to be completed with the help of a tutor. They included:

- *contact with the school on administrative issues,*
- *inviting students,*
- *planning a budget, including the costs of materials for games, room decoration, and small gifts for children,*
- *preparation of the decoration,*
- *purchase of necessary materials,*
- *bringing materials to the school and storing them there (agreeing a place with the school before),*
- *choosing the right music, ensuring the technical equipment, and providing it during the party,*
- *renting the necessary technical equipment for music,*
- *planning and preparing for the way of hosting/ conducting the event,*
- *organizing a translator,*
- *cleaning up after the event.*

A person responsible for each task was selected. The tutor also made sure that each group member set themselves a learning objective related to the tasks they undertook. All the participants decided that they wanted to develop their competence related to teamwork, and this objective became the main topic of reflection in the group. In addition, everyone had their own individual learning objectives (e.g. Dominika - gaining knowledge about ways to work with children having hearing loss).

During each project meeting, the tutor discussed progress of the project with the group members, appreciated each success, and analyzed all difficulties together with them - all in the context of the learning objectives defined. Two days after the ball, there was a meeting summarizing the event. It was almost entirely devoted to reflection on the event and the entire project/ learning process, in terms of skills acquired by project participants.

In order to share the results of the project, the group presented the project at self-empowerment workshops they regularly attended, illustrating their story with a slide show. After the presentation, the group of 6, together with their tutor, went to celebrate the success at a nearby ice cream shop.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- The service-learning process consists of 4 main steps: preparation and planning, action, evaluation, closure and celebration.
- These steps are linked by reflection, communication, promotion and monitoring – which we called crosscutting processes.

5. Needs assessment in service-learning project

Something that, at the very beginning, impacts the overall quality and success of a service-learning project is a well-established, planned and implemented needs assessment (NA) in which youth should play an active and key role, and youth workers should continuously monitor. It is a needs assessment not for the community, but with the community, because the community should also be actively involved and consulted in this process.

There are many definitions on needs assessment but one of the simplest found in literature is the one from Watkins, West Meiers and Visser (2012, 19): *“a needs assessment is simply a tool for making better decisions... You may not necessarily refer to the steps you take to inform your decisions as a needs assessment, but whenever you start your decision making by examining what results you are achieving today and what results you want to accomplish tomorrow, you are conducting a needs assessment.”*

Having that in mind, when talking about service-learning we can say that needs assessment is a tool for:

- defining relevant and achievable service and learning objectives which empower each other,
- establishing collaboration with the community (i.e. a civil society organization, a public institution),
- getting to know the community in which the service-learning project will be implemented (i.e. partner organization, beneficiaries, family, media),
- prioritizing (making decisions) on needs which will be tackled through the service-learning project, based on different criteria (i.e. available resources, time).

Needs assessment (NA) involves research and systematic consultation with community stakeholders and project beneficiaries before the project is designed and implemented. In that way NA helps youth and youth workers to identify needs/problems and involve those (partner organizations, their beneficiaries, families etc.) who are meant to benefit from the service-learning project in deciding on the final project design. But also, it ensures the greatest possible participation (of the community), and increases not only the precision of the diagnosis, but also the scope of project involvement from the outset (Regina, Ferrara, 2017).

A starting point in carrying out a NA should be the making of a community profile. A good community profile will help in addressing the correct issues and needs. A broad list of the types of things that should be considered when making a community profile are:

- The people in the community and the challenges they experience;
- The physical environment (i.e. types of housing, schools, roads, health services, sport, parks, transport services, ...);
- Access to government services;
- Community life – what else is happening in the community (civil society organizations, youth organizations, business organizations, cultural clubs, ...).

A community profile can be part of establishing a collaboration with the community and getting to know the partner organization which will be involved from that point on in the service-learning project.

After stepping into the local community, various methods can be used for needs assessment. Some authors (Watkins, West Meiers, Visser, 2012) differentiate NA methods for two distinct but connected NA steps, data collection and decision-making. No matter that, some of the frequently used NA methods are: document or data review, surveys, interviews, observation, focus groups, SWOT, fishbone - ishikawa diagram. Advantages and disadvantages of each method are presented in TABLE No 1.

Table 1 Methods of need assessment

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Document or data review: It is a way of collecting data by reviewing existing documents. The documents may be records of internal or external sources of the organization. They could be hard copy or electronic and may include reports, program logs, performance ratings, funding proposals, meeting minutes, newsletters, etc. .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information contained in extant data or documents is often independently verifiable. • Can be done independently and without having to solicit extensive input from other sources. • Typically less expensive than collecting the data on your own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information in the documents or data may represent a perspective that is not aligned with your needs assessment. • Data in the document sources may not be exactly what you want for your needs assessment. • Obtaining and analyzing necessary documents can be a time-consuming process. • You will not be able to control the quality of data being collected and must rely on the information provided in the documents as you assess quality and usability of the sources.
<p>Survey: is a research method used for collecting data from a predefined group of respondents to gain information and insights into various topics of interest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad range of data can be collected (e.g., attitudes, opinions, beliefs, values, behavior etc.). • Allows you to capture the perspectives of multiple groups on a variety of performance-related topics. • Surveys offer a variable format where you can ask a few questions or many questions, and likewise you can ask open-ended or closed-ended questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys are frequently used; as a result, people can get “burned out” on completing surveys. • Surveys do not give you the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to respondents (unlike interviews or focus groups). • Although surveys may seem easy to prepare, they are often developed poorly.
<p>Interview: is a structured conversation where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers. It refers to a one-on-one conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews typically allow for more focused discussions and follow-up questions. • Individuals may offer information in interviews that they wouldn’t offer in a group context. • Interviews can be an excellent source for stories and context. • The interviewer can observe the nonverbal behavior of an interviewee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time requirements for interviewers and interviewees can be significant. • Interviews have the potential to reduce the scope and sample for data collection. • The results of multiple interviews may contradict each other or may be difficult to analyze. • Interviewees may be biased or may represent only a limited perspective on performance issues and themes. • Interviews, if not done well, can get off topic and frustrate both interviewer and interviewee (the interviewer can leave without the necessary information to guide his or her assessment; the interviewee can feel that the time was not productive).

<p>Observation: is a way of gathering data by watching behavior, events, or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By observing without interfering, you can create a performance observation that accurately documents the steps, procedures, tools, and decisions made in completing a task. • Observations do not rely on the perspectives or memories of those observed. • Observations can be done by multiple members of the needs assessment team to validate the findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations require the time and related expenses of having an observer. • Observations alone may miss some of the decisions, and other non visible aspects. • Observers may introduce biases into the needs assessment. Therefore, it is important that observers are trained in the observation process and are sensitized about biases and the need for objectivity. Having multiple observers can also be a way to address issues of observer bias. Observers should also be aware that those being observed might change their behavior, change what they say or do, or say or do things they think the observer would want to hear. The observer should consider options on how to conduct the observation to avoid influencing the person(s) being observed.
<p>Focus group: is a group interview of approximately six to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interests. ... Focus groups are a qualitative data collection method, meaning that the data is descriptive and cannot be measured numerically.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through a focus group format, multiple people can be interviewed at one time. • Allow members of the focus group to build on each other's comments and reactions. This approach can yield a synergy of discussion around topics or themes. • Focus groups can help people come to consensus and make challenging decisions (such as prioritizing needs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members may not contribute equally to the discussion in a focus group format. More reserved members may not feel comfortable inserting their contributions in the discussion. Other participants may try to dominate discussions. • Gaining information from the group can be challenging. There is a risk of "groupthink" that can emerge through this process, thus diverting the discussion and making it hard to refocus the group on different issues. • Discussions may take too long to cover all of the relevant topics and to offer everyone a chance to participate. • Because of the presence of others, participants may not feel comfortable sharing more sensitive information or views. • Focus groups can easily get "off task" if the facilitator does not maintain structure and control throughout the process.

<p>SWOT: is a method for identifying and analyzing internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats that shape current and future operations and help develop strategic goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SWOT builds on the value of a process that is already familiar in most organizations. • SWOT factors are prioritized in relation to other SWOT factors, rather than simply listed and given equal value. • A SWOT engages a group in defining the relationship among SWOT factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning values to each SWOT factor can be challenging for group members. • Additional time is required to move from the SWOT factors to their relationships to the recommendations about what should be done next.
<p><i>Fishbone diagram: a visualization tool for categorizing the potential causes of a problem. It is a visual way to look at cause and effect.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishbone diagrams permit a thoughtful analysis that avoids overlooking any possible root causes for a need. • The fishbone technique is easy to implement and creates an easy-to-understand visual representation of the causes, the categories of causes, and the need. • By using a fishbone diagram, you are able to focus the group on the big picture as to possible causes or factors influencing the problem or need. • Even after the need has been addressed, the fishbone diagram shows areas of weakness that—once exposed—can be rectified before causing more sustained difficulties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The simplicity of a fishbone diagram can be both its strength and its weakness. As a weakness, the simplicity of the fishbone diagram may make it difficult to represent the truly interrelated nature of problems and causes in some very complex situations.

Source: Watkins, R., West Meiers, M., Visser, Y. L. (2012). A Guide to Assessing Needs - Essential Tools for Collecting Information, Making Decisions, and Achieving Development Results.

<p>KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment in service-learning is a tool for i) defining service and learning objectives, ii) establishing collaboration with the community, iii) getting to know the community, iv) prioritizing (making decisions) on needs. • The community is a crucial partner in the process of needs assessment. • Frequently used NA methods are: document or data review, surveys, interviews, observation, focus groups, SWOT, fishbone - ishikawa diagram. But there are many many more. • Combine different methods so the disadvantages of one ‘replace’ the advantages of the other.
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6. Objectives in service-learning projects

One of the first steps in planning a service-learning project is to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bounded (SMART) objectives, those focused on learning (youth – students) but also on service (community - stakeholders). Why is it so? It's because these objectives will lead you in choosing the right way, approach and methodology, defining planning steps, documentation etc. in the whole process of a service-learning project.

The specific of service-learning, as already said in this handbook, is that it represents a pedagogical methodology which puts emphasis on experiential learning¹ and learning by doing. So the main focus is on learning, but a pretty much different kind of learning we are used to seeing and experiencing, especially if we consider (traditional) formal education. It's important to stress it once again, youth workers planning to apply service-learning methodology and youth actively involved in a service-learning project have to be sure that the set objectives equally include those directed to learning (learning objectives) and to service (community needs/problems).

What is a service objective (SO)? A service objective is basically a statement representing a desired change in the community – the solution of a problem, a satisfied need. Service objectives rely and are defined based on the results of a need assessment carried out in and with different community stakeholders. This is why an implementation of a well structured and timely need assessment is an integral part of a service-learning project. We can even call them service(-learning) project objectives, meaning that the objectives are defined when the problem/challenge/need is clearly researched and defined. For those working in the civic sector, the easiest way is to look at SO as project specific goals, short-term goals that should be accomplished upon completion of the service-learning project.

TABLE No.2 Differences between service and learning objectives

	SERVICE OBJECTIVES	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Focus	Community needs/problems	Students learning
Content (consists of)	Change in behavior, policy, existing practices (i.e. services)	Knowledge, skills, values
Criterion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific • achievable • measurable • relevant and • time-bounded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific • achievable • measurable • relevant and • time-bounded
Example	Improve the quality of social services for elderly people in rural areas.	Collect, synthesize and interpret data for design of specific interventions in the local community.

What are the learning objectives (LO)? A learning objective² is a statement that represents what youth are expected to know, understand, and be able to demonstrate, after completion of a process of learning (i.e. student/learner will be able to define service-learning; student/learner will be able to conduct a service-learning project). In the table below, can be found three domains of educational activities (Bloom, 1956), and verbs that can be used, listed from the lowest level of LO to the highest level. This can help youth workers in defining their LOs when implementing service-learning methodology in formal and non-formal education.

1 There is a widely known model of experiential learning by David Kolb (Kolb's circle) based upon a process of experiential logical inquiry set forth by philosopher John Dewey.

2 Bloom (1956) and revised Bloom Taxonomy by Anderson, Krathwohl (2001).

TABLE No.3 Domains of educational activities and action verbs to use

DOMAINS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES / LEARNING	ACTION VERBS TO USE
<p align="center">Cognitive domain (knowledge and understanding)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define, explain, list; • generalize, predict, recognize; • demonstrate, interpret; • analyze, criticize; • categorize, compare, summarize; • formulate, create.
<p align="center">Psychomotor domain (skills)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe, detect, identify; • explain, move, show; • copy, follow; • display, manipulate, sketch, assemble, organize; • adapt, change, rearrange, reorganize; • create, design, build, develop .
<p align="center">Affective domain (attitudes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledge, ask, attentive; • discuss, present, assist; • appreciate, cherish, propose, respect; • compare, relate, share, connect; • act, modify, revise, solve, question.

Learning objectives should reflect the importance of active youth participation in the service-learning projects, and guide the development of needed materials and service-learning activities. It's important to stress that LOs are those that are assessed in service-learning, especially when keeping in mind grading in formal education. But the specific characteristic of service-learning methodology is that SOs strengthen and enable (the achievement of) LOs.

Sigmon (1994) proposed a typology that illustrates different ways of how service-learning can be incorporated into practice (Table NO 4). Sigmon illustrates four levels of service-learning pedagogy putting different emphases on service-learning practises. In the first approach - **service-LEARNING s-L** - learning objectives are a priority, a primary driver of a SL project, and the service objectives are secondary, less meaningful. The approach **SERVICE-learning (S-l)** puts a primary focus on service objectives while the learning objectives are secondary. Any project or activity which is implemented that completely separates the activity from learning objectives, or without thought of specific learning objectives is service learning (**s l**). The core essence can be found in the last approach **SERVICE-LEARNING (S-L)** in which service and learning objectives are carefully given equal weight, SOs and LOs enhance each other providing a reciprocal experience for all participants, they empower one another.

TABLE No 4: A service learning typology

<p align="center">service-LEARNING (s-L)</p>	<p align="center">Learning objectives primary, service objectives secondary</p>
<p align="center">SERVICE-learning (S-l)</p>	<p align="center">Service objectives primary, learning objectives secondary</p>
<p align="center">service learning (s l)</p>	<p align="center">Service and learning objectives completely separate</p>
<p align="center">SERVICE-LEARNING (S-L)</p>	<p align="center">Service and learning objectives of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants</p>

Source: Sigmon, 1994

After choosing the approach that will be applied, the next step is to use a simple and useful tool that can guide youth workers in defining service and learning objectives presented in table No 5. In defining SOs and LOs it is important to think ahead. When defining SOs and LOs, youth workers should also think and plan activities that will lead to the defined objectives, and ways of evaluating and assessing them. Of course, in the process of implementing a service-learning project, changes in activities and evaluation/assessment could arise, but the usage of this tool will help youth workers and youth in monitoring the whole process, and will give them additional space for needed and timely adjustments.

TABLE No. 5 A tool for defining service and learning objectives

	SERVICE OBJECTIVES (what change do you want them to achieve?)	ACTIVITY (how will that be accomplished?)	EVALUATION (how will you/they know that they achieved it?)
Need / problem in the community: Isolation of Roma population	Established cooperation and networking with Roma population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> educational activities (lectures, workshops, video projections) music and culinary programme / meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the satisfaction of the target groups with established cooperation and networking possibilities Evaluate the increase in numbers of opportunities for mutual learning, cooperation and networking (between Roma and domicile population)
	LEARNING OBJECTIVES (what do you want young people to be able to?)	ACTIVITY (how will that be accomplished?)	ASSESSMENT (how will you know that young people are able to?)
	Identify the main patterns of ghettoization of the Roma population. Explain the specifics of everyday life of the Roma national minority. Demonstrate skills in organizing and conducting various public events. Effective distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the project team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> studying literature on the topic carrying out the need assessment with Roma population design a service-learning project plan implement the designed service-learning project plan and main activities by the project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of youth knowledge on the topic of Roma minority (i.e. test) (Self)Assessment of project team contributions, roles and tasks carried out

The value and importance of SOs and LOs is additionally confirmed in the stage of evaluation and assessment of SL projects because at the end of the project

- the achievement of service objectives should be evaluated by different stakeholders, and
- the achievement of learning objectives should be assessed for each participating youth. These complementary processes will give youth workers information and data for further improvements of service-learning methodology in practice, and will represent valuable and needed feedback for youth on their achievements.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Service objectives is a statement representing a desired change in the community.
- Learning outcome is a statement representing what youth are expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning.
- SOs strengthen and enable (the achievement of) LOs.
- The results of a community need assessment are crucial in defining SOs.
- SOs and LOs are equally relevant in the first -planning and preparation, and last step - evaluation/assessment of a service-learning project.

7. Monitoring and evaluation in service-learning

7.1. Monitoring

Cambridge dictionary describes monitoring as: *to watch and check a situation carefully for a period of time in order to discover something about it*. Based on the definition of project monitoring (Novota, 2017) as a systematic and continuous collection of data in order to check the course of the project, a much appropriate definition of monitoring of service-learning can be derived: a systematic and continuous collection of data in order to

- a) check the compliance of project implementation with project plans (process), and
- b) check the accomplishment of the service-learning outcomes (progress).

As mentioned in the Service learning manual for faculty (2013), monitoring engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals. Monitoring allows for necessary changes to be made to project development and implementation. When seen as an ongoing process, set at the beginning of a project and done on a regular basis, it allows for a timely reaction to different circumstances. Keeping an ongoing monitoring and documentation of the project is a critical, and often overlooked aspect of a quality service-learning experience. Monitoring and documenting the learning and actions taken throughout the project, as opposed to after the project is completed, provides valuable information for the reflection processes, for evaluation as well as for the promotion of the project (Brozmanova Gregorova et.al, 2020).

In order to monitor all the key aspects of a project, various methods, techniques and documentation should be developed and used in the process. The data collected in this way can be used for various purposes, but without additional analysis and interpretation it will not answer the question of how successful the youth was, or how successful the project was, and if the set goals were achieved (Novota, 2017). This additional analysis and interpretation is done through evaluation, and it should be done at the end of the project or at another time during the project implementation, using the data collected through monitoring.

In the context of service-learning, there can be different aspects to monitor. On one hand, you as a youth worker/teacher should monitor the youth/students involved in the implementation of a service-learning project, but also the project activities should be monitored in order to ensure that they are being implemented as planned. Youth worker/teacher and community partners will both play a role in monitoring youth progress, and should work collaboratively to fairly share the responsibilities.

It is important for both parties to negotiate and define:

- What youth'/students' activities will be monitored,
- What they each agree to do to monitor the youth/students,
- Their frequency of monitoring and giving feedback to youth/students,
- How they want to communicate with each other about students'/youth' progress throughout the project, and the frequency of this communication,
- How they will work together to address issues that may arise.

In turn, youth need to know what each party expects of them and what guidance they can count on receiving (Mihalynuk & Seifer, 2008 according to Service learning manual for faculty, 2013). The above mentioned indicates also the importance of clear and regular communication in the process of progress monitoring, for all parties involved in it, especially youth, but also the youth worker, community partner etc.

The degree of monitoring youth will need depends on the level of exposure, capacity and responsibility the participants already have at the start of the service-learning project. Generally, the more they are able to take independent responsibility for their service-learning work (i.e. further along the Three Phase Model's continuum) the less they need direct, hands-on supervision, and the more they benefit from overarching project oversight and guidance (CUPS, 2010).

As already mentioned, there are different aspects to be monitored in a service-learning project. The specific of the methodology is that it proposes youth leadership, so the process of monitoring the project implementation is something that can and should be the young people's responsibility. This way, young people are engaged the most, can learn and develop organizational skills, problem solving, innovation, planning skills, creativity that can all be very useful in their future personal and professional life. Since the whole idea of service-learning, and what is proposed in this manual is to have projects based on the real needs of the community, it is very important to closely monitor if those needs are being met. It's important to monitor the clear objectives of the service-learning activities of the project, communication among stakeholders, team work, satisfaction of different stakeholders involved. Additionally, youth workers can decide and choose to monitor specific aspects that they find relevant for their work, subject or course (in the formal or non-formal educational system), such as specific skills or knowledge, relationships etc.

The information and data gathered by both monitoring youth' activity, and monitoring the implementation of activities will be very useful for the final evaluation.

7.2. Assessment and evaluation

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines assessment as *the action or an instance of making a judgment about something : the act of assessing something*. Evaluation is defined as *determination of the value, nature, character, or quality of something or someone*. It's a systematic process for an organization to obtain information on its activities, its impacts and the effectiveness of its work, so that it can improve its activities and describe its accomplishments (Mattessich, 2003).

In the case of those projects involving learning and service, it is essential that the service-learning developed, as well as the impact of the project (on youth, community, specific beneficiaries etc.) and the achieved learning, is being evaluated. This presumes evaluation of the design of the project and fulfillment of the goals targeting community service, as well as fulfillment of the pedagogical objectives (Youth Stride. A Service-Learning manual for the Caribbean), which is referred to as assessment.

Evaluation is a key aspect of any project. In the context of service-learning projects, it entails reflecting on the results and impact of the actions that were implemented, in order to be able to correct mistakes, value the right moves, and eventually, make the changes that are considered necessary. But it also means analyzing, by using indicators, whether the envisaged stages were completed and the objectives reached (Youth Stride. A Service-Learning manual for the Caribbean).

As mentioned, because of the specifics of service-learning projects, focusing both on the learning and the service, it requires evaluation of both the goals set for the service in the community and the achievement of the educational objectives of the project: knowledge and competencies acquired and applied (Regina, Ferrara, 2017). Having that in mind, assessment as a form of evaluation can be defined as the method of testing the level that youth have achieved in learning (academic) and the SL outcomes that are set by a youth worker at the beginning of formal or non-formal education (subject, course, training etc.). We can also define it as grading, but having in mind that young people are being graded on the academic product, not on their hours of service.

On the other hand, evaluation represents the feedback from different stakeholders in the process of service-learning. The aim of the evaluation is not to grade or assess, rather give feedback on the whole process. Each project needs evaluation not just of the content, but of the whole project itself (Brozmanova Gregorova et. Al, 2020).

Therefore, the evaluation may consist of:

- a) Youth evaluating youth workers and community partners;
- b) Community partners evaluating the youth and youth workers;
- c) Youth workers evaluating the community partners;
- d) Youth workers doing self-evaluation based on all proposed evaluations. (Brozmanova Gregorova et al, 2020).

In the evaluation of the progress of the project as a whole, the flexibility in planning, the coherence between the initial objectives and the activities developed, as well as the efficient allocation of resources and available time, must be considered. The evaluation, in addition to the achieved goals, must consider the impact of the service on the target group and on those who provide it, the experiences of the process, the individual and group participation, and the derived situation for example, how relations with the community were changed (Youth Stride. A Service-Learning manual for the Caribbean). Data and information collected through monitoring get the full meaning when used for the purpose of evaluation of service-learning projects. But at the same time, it is recommended to make an additional effort to collect additional data, especially for the purpose of evaluation (i.e. interviews, focus groups etc.).

Assessment and evaluation are similar concepts, we can see them the following way:

- Evaluation/assessment = impact measurement of a SL project
- Evaluation/assessment = assessment of learning outcomes and individual performance
- Evaluation/assessment = evaluation of different aspects of SL project implementation from different actors.

TABLE No 6. Comparison between different types of evaluation

Types of evaluation/ assessment	What are we evaluating?	To whom is the evaluation intended?	Who is involved in the evaluation?
Assessment	Learning outcomes and competencies acquired (knowledge, skills, attitudes) Individual performance	To youth” individual performance	Youth worker and young person
Impact assessment of an SL project	Learning outcomes and competencies acquired (knowledge, skills, attitudes) Individual performance	To youth/students To youth worker To the community partner	Youth Beneficiaries of an organization People from the organization Community stakeholders
Feedback from different stakeholders	i.e. communication, relevance of activities etc.	To youth To youth worker To the general public	Youth Youth worker Beneficiaries of an organization People from the organization Community stakeholders

7.3. Practical advice and documentation examples on how to do monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring plan

One useful and widely used document that can help you monitor the implementation of your service-learning project is the monitoring plan. It is usually in the form of a table that gives you an overview of activities, results and indicators you need to achieve, methods of data collection, responsible people, dynamics etc. There are various examples of the structure of a monitoring plan. Below you can find some examples of tables that are used in practice to create a monitoring plan.

Example 1.

ACTIVITIES	TYPE OF INFORMATION	METHOD	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS	MONITORING DYNAMICS
List all activities from the project, each in a separate column	Type of data to be collected about the implementation of activities that will lead to the fulfillment of results	Monitoring technique / method to be used for data collection (e.g. survey, interview, group interview)	Who will be responsible for collecting certain data	How often will the required data be collected (once a week, monthly etc.)

Source: Novota, S. (2017) Monitoring i evaluacija - Vodič za praćenje provedbe i vrednovanje projekata. Udruga za razvoj civilnog društva SMART

Example 2.

MONITORING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AT THE LEVEL OF EXPECTED RESULTS					
ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS TYPE OF DATA	METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PERSONS	MONITORING DYNAMICS
List all activities from the project, each in a separate column	List results and indicators at the level of results	What types of data will be collected on the implementation of activities that will lead to the fulfillment of results Monitoring technique / method to be used for data collection (eg survey, interview, group interview)	All work and additional documentation to be prepared to ensure efficient data collection	Who will be responsible for collecting certain data	How often will the necessary data be collected (once a week, monthly, annually etc.)

Source: Novota, S. (2017) Monitoring i evaluacija - Vodič za praćenje provedbe i vrednovanje projekata. Udruga za razvoj civilnog društva SMART

Documentation

To be able to implement structured monitoring and evaluation of activities in your service-learning project, to ensure that everything is going as planned, and to prevent possible difficulties, it is important to collect different documentation which contains different and valuable data and information. When thinking about what kind of documentation to use, it is important to use only useful and necessary documentation, as not to overload yourself and young people, avoid getting lost in lots of data and information.

There are multiple ways to document an SL project's stages and processes. This can be done in various forms (diary, portfolio, notice board, project folder, blog, web page etc.) and formats (written, audio-visual, multimedia etc.). Documenting, in the context of a service-learning project, could also imply sending reports with the goal to demonstrate how the SL project was beneficial for different stakeholders (Brozmanova Gregorova et al, 2020).

Most commonly used methods and techniques of data and information collection in the monitoring and evaluation process, which are used in practice by civil society organizations, include the following:

- Questionnaires,
- Interviews - i.e. structured, semi-structured, unstructured,
- Observing,
- Content analysis,
- Analysis of statistics,
- Focus groups,
- Mapping,
- Statements / testimonies / success stories,
- Case studies,
- Measurements and tests (skills, knowledge),
- Audio visual recordings.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Monitoring is an ongoing process and should be done continuously using various methods and techniques.
- What is going to be monitored, how and who is responsible for each part has to be set at the beginning of the project. Combine different methods, so the disadvantages of one 'are being replaced' the advantages of the other.
- Young people should be responsible for monitoring the project implementation, however youth workers and community partners should also be involved, especially in order to monitor learning and service objectives.
- Evaluation is a key aspect of the project. It entails reflecting on the results and impact of the actions that were implemented in order to be able to correct mistakes, value the right moves and make the changes that are considered necessary.
- Service-learning projects are focusing both on the learning and the service, so they require evaluation of both the goals set for the service in the community and the achievement of the educational objectives of the project: knowledge and competencies.
- Assessment as a form of evaluation is focused on achievement of the educational objectives of the project.
- Evaluation is also focused on the goals set for the service and represents the feedback from different stakeholders and impact on different stakeholders (the community/beneficiaries, youth).
- To form a relevant and objective picture of the overall service-learning project it is important to involve everyone (or as much as possible) participating in the SL project in the evaluation process.

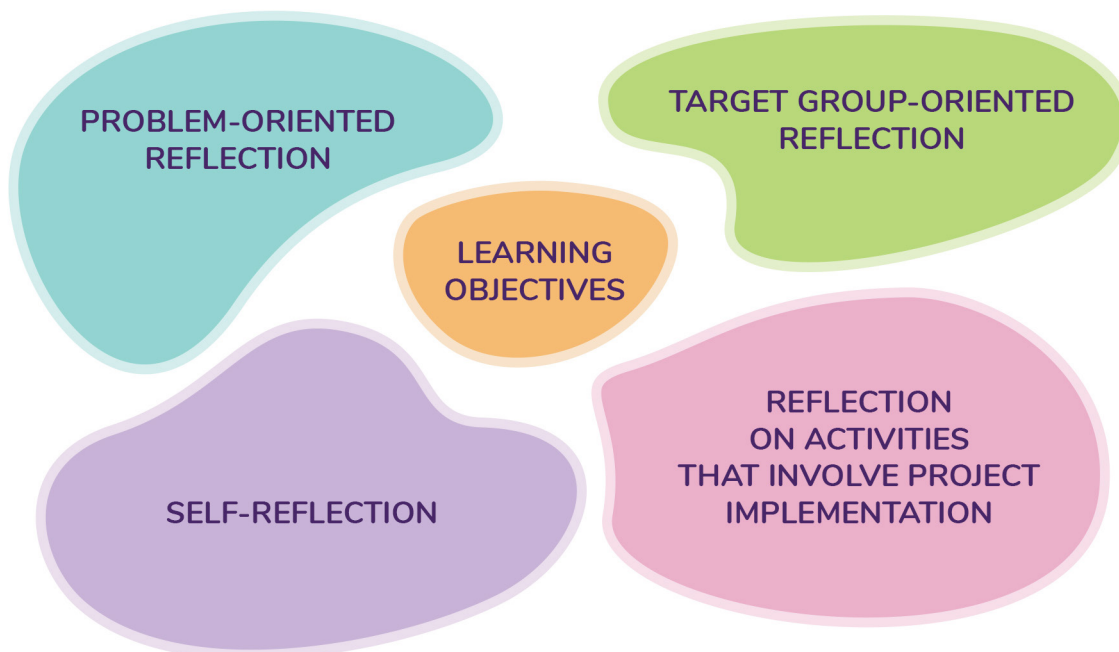
8. Reflection in service-learning

The term “reflection” originates from the Latin word *reflexio* (reflection, mirroring) and *reflektere* (reflect), and we understand it as a basic way of learning through experience. Reflection offers students the opportunity to think critically about their experiences and to explore their own values, opinions and beliefs. It has a personal impact, by producing useful imbalances that lead to change, reprocessing, and reconstruction of the information processing modalities. It also offers room for questioning, for a mutual exchange of ideas, experience and problem-solving skills, and for finding solutions to community problems for which they plan or realize their service-learning activities. (Brozmanová Gregorová at al., 2020).

In the service-learning context, the reflection of experience is a necessary condition for young people to develop and shape their attitudes in a targeted way. Reflection is considered a key “ingredient” that transforms experience from SL activity into learning, it has a vital role in awareness-building and transforms service-learning into critical pedagogy, with a potential to determine personal transformation and social change (Jacoby, 2015). It does not happen automatically, but needs to be facilitated, most often initiated by an educational professional, in our case, a youth worker. Reflection serves to look back on the service both in terms of the work content, and in terms of personal experience. It is important to carry out the reflection together with young people continuously. In the case of one-off events, it is also important not to forget about it, and have allocated time for it after the completion of the project

The four dimensions of reflection

The service-learning process is supported by a youth worker, who helps young people to decide about their educational goals and their involvement in the project. The role of the youth worker is to regularly discuss with participants everything that goes on within the project as it proceeds and stimulate them to reflect on the learning. This reflection should embrace four dimensions: the problem (to which the project responds), the project’s target group, the participants implementing the project and the activities within which the project is implemented. The youth worker’s task is to ensure that during meetings with young people none of these areas are left out.



There may be a temptation to limit reflection to self-reflection. However, this is not enough. For the process to be complete, it must take place in the context of a local need / challenge to which the project activity / volunteering responds. It must include reflection on the target group, and not lose sight of the topics of the classes during which the project is carried out (taking into account that these can also take out-of-school forms, e.g. a group for young people from foster care which aims to support them in becoming independent).

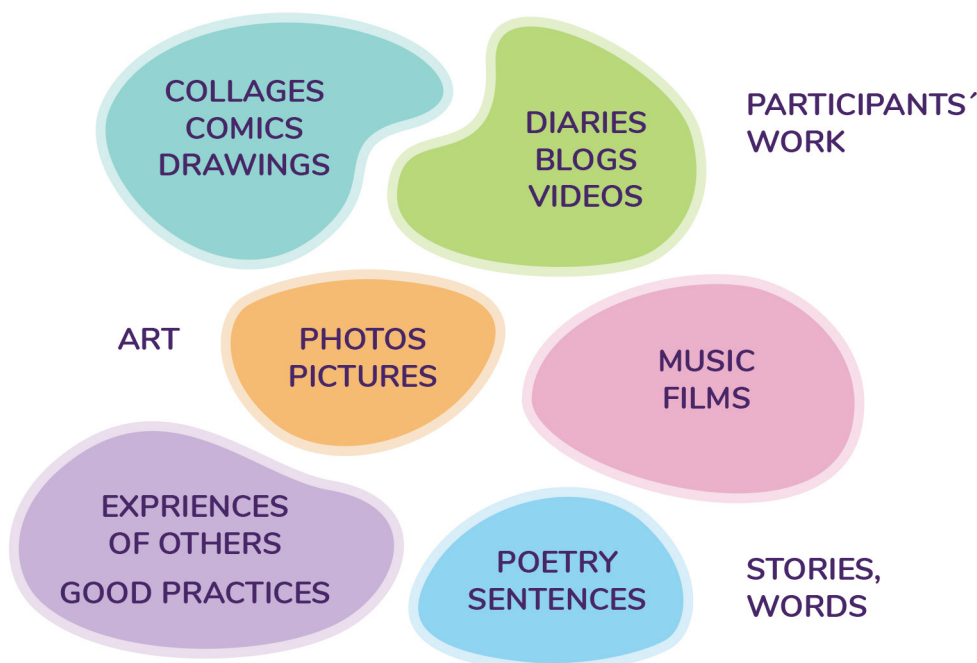
Table No. 7 Examples of questions that support reflection in the service-learning

<p>Problem-oriented reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is your help in this area needed? • What do you consider to be the key problem in this area? And what do you think are the main reasons for the problem? • How can you use the knowledge acquired in this area to introduce a greater change?
<p>Target group-oriented reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What similarities do you see between yourself and the group you worked with? • How do you think you were perceived by this group? • What is the typical day like for a person from the group you worked with?
<p>Self-reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills did you develop implementing the project? • What was difficult for you? How did you deal with these difficulties? • What could you do for others now having the knowledge gained from the project?
<p>Reflection on activities that involve project implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the project relate to the topic of the program? • Did any knowledge and skills previously gained help you in the implementation of the project? Which knowledge/ skills? In what way did they help?

Source: Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (2021)

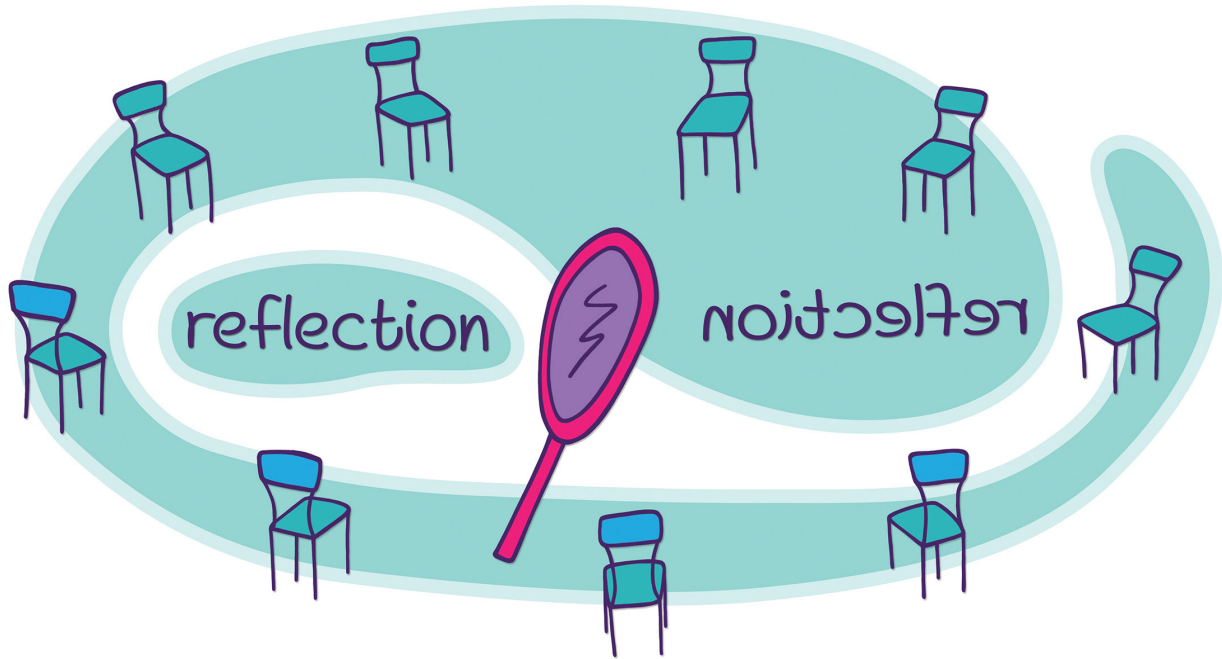
How to inspire reflection?

There are different ways to inspire reflection among participants of the project. Youth workers can simply have a discussion with the group or talk individually to each participant asking the questions which lead to deeper understanding of the learning process. However, there are different tools which can be used to help participants to reflect. The inclusion of elements of art and creativity into work with young people helps to activate the right hemisphere of the brain – logical thinking and drawing conclusions. Metaphorical cards, paintings, photos, music, allegorical stories, poetry or even simple words which can refer to deeper meanings can help participants to name the phenomenon or the problem. Self-reflection very often brings better results when it is inspired by something from the outside. Also encouraging creativity, for example by creating collages, comics, drawing, blogs, videos or different forms of diaries, gives participants an opportunity to think outside the box and to notice and understand more of the learning process.



KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Reflection is considered a key “ingredient” that transforms experience from service activity into learning.
- The reflection should embrace four dimensions: the problem (to which the project responds), the project’s target group, the participants implementing the project and the activities within which the project is implemented.
- There are many different ways to inspire reflection among participants of the project.



9. Promotion and communication of the service-learning project

“If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” We have all heard about the famous thought experiment, but lately the question seems to be valid for everything we do. It is especially valid for a civic organization or a school developing projects that are more innovative, more educational, and more beneficial for the community than other projects. We need to make sure people hear about them.

As a big bonus, being part of a promotion team is guaranteed to develop communication skills that are so needed in the times we live in. So, while your organization is gaining visibility, the participants in service-learning projects are gaining vital skills.

Communication strategy

The communication strategy is similar to the communication of any project. We need to figure out what are the most interesting aspects of our project. What are the messages we want to send people? What makes our project different? What would catch our target groups' attention?

By developing a service-learning project, following the typical stages of one, we also have some of the messages intrinsically included.

- ***What is service-learning?*** – the methodology of your project is the key aspect that makes it different from others, and ensures that while your organization is responding to needs in the community, the young people involved are also trained.

This message can be published before the beginning of the project in order to recruit possible participants, by convincing them or their parents, in order to establish partnerships with other organizations, or in order to raise funds.

It can also be communicated throughout the project lifetime whenever you feel it is most needed for your public to better understand the type of activity you are trying to develop.

- ***The launch of the project*** – this message is typical for any type of project. It includes details about the reasons we are doing the project, the objectives, the activities you are planning to organize, introduction of the team, beneficiaries and partners. This is the moment everyone is announced that they should follow the actions because you are doing something worth watching!

This message will of course need to be formulated and published right after there has been a good idea about what you plan to do.

- ***The process*** – since this type of project might not be very known in the local communities, a very interesting aspect will be the processes followed: the reflection, the educational process, the landmarks reached, the lessons learned by doing something good for others.

Communicating the process can be done while the project is running or at the end of the project, when it will be presented as one of the results.

- ***The project landmarks*** – the first project meeting, the time needs were identified, the aha! moments in reflection, the first difficulty that participants have overcome, the first success registered in the project, meeting the beneficiaries, the solution youngsters decided to adopt, reaching the first objective – these are all landmarks in the project, and there can be many more others.

It is important to communicate these when they happen. This way we keep the public engaged and make them feel closer to and more invested in the project. Of course, you can also present them at the end of the project, in order to let everyone in on the story of how it came to be.

Who is the target group and how to reach them?

Like in any other project participants are developing, the target of promotional efforts needs to be the general target of the school or organization, the potential or actual partners, the participants and their friends and families, and the beneficiaries and their friends and families. If there are any other specific stakeholders possibly identified - maybe a public authority, a commercial organization etc. - they should be included on this list.

It is great to come up with innovative ways to communicate and promote the project, but the most important thing to be kept in mind is that in order for a message to be effective, it needs to reach its target group. So unless innovation in communication is one of the project's objectives, it is great to use the means of communication that have proven to work before. For example:

- Organizational website or any social media page,
- Online or offline newsletter of the organization,
- Posters in the school or in the organization, or even in the city, where you have permission, and it is relevant,
- Flyers distributed in the mail or in relevant crowds,
- Individual emails,
- Press releases, interviews or videos,
- A speech or presentation at other meetings or events with relevant stakeholders.

If the means should remain close to the ones the stakeholders are already accustomed to, the way participants formulate their message is where team members can manifest their creativity. The message can take various shapes such as posters, videos, live videos, blog posts, vlog posts, online presentations or meetings, photo albums, gifs, or even drawings, comics or memes. It depends on the skills participants have or they plan to develop, and what is most suited to the project and the target group they are trying to engage.

The good news is that there are more and more apps and online tools that can be used to support communication in creative ways. [Pixlr](#) and [Google photos](#) have nice photo editing options, and if participants are looking for readymade photos that are royalty free, they can use [Pixabay](#). [Picteller](#) and [Canva](#) are great tools for creating posters, invitations, certificates, reports, but also presentations, gifs and videos, and they are easy to learn and use and offer countless templates to choose from. [Clideo](#) and [Typito](#) can help in editing the videos they make, and there are many more other tools or even mobile apps that they can easily search for. The ones mentioned above are at least partly free at the time of this publication, and even the ones that have costs, sometimes have good discounts for NGOs or educational institutions.

Task division in the promotion activity

Just like any other project activity, the promotion and communication can be done by the project coordinator or the participants involved. It can be a team effort, or can be delegated to one or more members of the team to take care of it.

If the team already has the skills needed, then the promotion activity will only have its classic objective, to let the public know what they are doing. If communication and promotional skills are something planned to be developed through the project, then they will need to include this in the preparation of the project step. Tutors can choose to guide the participants in developing these skills themselves or reach out and find a professional willing to volunteer to help the team out.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Communication is a continuous process among the participants in the project, with the institution, with community partners, and with the community.
- Service-learning project involves creating effective communication channels between the participants in the project and between participants and the community.
- Communication promotes additional learning and allows us to make the invisible visible: specific learning regarding communication processes, the visibility of the project and the community engagement of youth.

10. Closure and celebration

Mankind has had celebrations or feasts since the beginning of time. People have celebrated the gods, the seasons, their communities, birthdays and anniversaries, the end of an educational process, and many other occasions. This is not just because we like to party. Celebrations have many functions.

The celebration of a service-learning project is a moment in which efforts and achievements are recognized, and participants let everyone know they have reached a new landmark – managed to get results in the community while also developing knowledge and skills.

For the participants of the SL project it is a moment to reflect on the whole adventure, and have their actions and their learning recognized.

For the beneficiaries a celebration brings closure. Depending on the community they serve, it could be extremely important to make sure they know the project has ended, and the support offered has not simply disappeared. It was always designed like this. It is a moment to say thank you and goodbye in a healthy manner.

For the possible partners, sponsors, other people or organizations involved, this can be a moment to understand exactly what their support means for the community and the project team. Seeing the direct results can help them feel proud and encourage them to offer this kind of support again.

For the organizers – either school or a non-profit organization – it is a great occasion to let everyone know about the projects they are developing, the way we involve the young people and the impact they have on our community.

For the public or the community participants are active in, it is an opportunity to get to know them, the projects, and the ways in which anyone could get involved and support the activity

Who should be involved

As it was stated above, a celebration can be a very important moment for a quite large number of people, and so it should be figured out how to involve each and every one of them. Of course, participants might not have the capacity to organize a huge banquet or feast for the whole local community. However, they can involve all of them to various degrees.

They can organize an event for the participants and the beneficiaries, or part of them, and maybe the partners they managed to engage in the project, and they can send a newsletter for the others in the community. They can ask a representative of the press to cover the event and write about the achievements.

The objective here is to find a way to reach every stakeholder one way or another.

How to celebrate

The ways to celebrate are different and of course, entirely dependent on the resources and capacity, but the good news is, there are possibilities for everyone, and we will explore some of them by going through the most important aspects of an event.

THE TIMING

The moment participants choose for the celebration is very important and it takes a little planning. The event should come after the activity. It should be soon enough for the public not to forget about the project but participants should also be able to evaluate the project beforehand, so they can be ready to present the results.

Participants should also make sure that the people they want to join the event are available at that time and will attend. Send them the invites at least one week before and discuss with the partners when making the plan.

THE AGENDA

How participants choose to celebrate is up to the team, but there are some parts that should not be missing:

- The presentation of the results achieved through the project,
- The recognition of the participants activity – certificates are very appreciated,
- The „Thank you” moment for everyone involved.

In addition to these key moments, it is recommended that they choose other activities that are either connected to the project, designed to attract more people to the event or both. They can create an exhibition of photos taken during the project, a video screening of the process or something connected to the topic, a concert or artistic moment, a moment in which the direct beneficiaries show their gratitude or present themselves.

If the resources are scarce, participants should not worry about the size or complexity of the event, it could simply be a small gathering where they enjoy some pizzas together, but making sure they include the three moments above.

THE LOCATION

The choice of location, similarly to the other choices, needs to be fitted for the public they expect at the event and also for the project they have developed. If it is possible, a good idea is to organize the event at the location of the beneficiaries. This way youngsters can make it easier for them to attend, and also show the other people involved the live results of their activities. The place in which they have developed the project and worked the most could also be a meaningful location, especially for the participants of the SL project.

THE ORGANIZING TEAM

Even though this is an event for the participants as much as it is for everyone else, this does not mean they should not also be involved in the planning and organization of the celebration. By including them and their preferences, it is made sure they will also enjoy it as much as possible. Of course, some members or the tutor can keep a few things secret from the others to let them enjoy some surprises.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- Closure and celebration is a very important stage, which, unfortunately, sometimes happens to be forgotten.
- Make sure you plan a type of meeting or trip that will conclude the whole process, and give you the opportunity to show and appreciate your participants' achievements.
- The ways to celebrate are different and of course, entirely dependent on the resources and capacity.
- To plan the celebration, think about: timing, agenda, location and organizing team.



closure & celebration

11. Service-learning online

During the COVID19 pandemic, many of the activities had to be transferred to the internet. It happened also to the voluntary activities. Because of the lockdowns and Covid restrictions, various types of voluntary involvement became impossible to conduct. Direct contacts with another person often turned out to be possible only online or by phone. It affected many social projects and also changed the way of thinking about volunteering in many organizations. Some of the opportunities for volunteers have temporarily disappeared, and new forms of possible involvement emerged.

It happened also in our case. In all partner countries, it was no longer possible to continue activities as before the pandemic. Many of the Service-learning projects had to be carried out partially or even completely online. It could be frustrating for many of us, but it also gave an opportunity to work in a different way, to discover new online possibilities and to develop the area of e-volunteering. We realized that Service-learning was possible completely online and that such use of this method was legitimate and made sense.

Online work extends possibilities of volunteering. It makes it possible to involve in the projects/activities people who would not get involved in traditional forms of volunteering. It also gives a possibility to work in a dispersed team – from different cities, areas and even countries. Thanks to online tools, applications and social media the target group of the project/activities can be much wider and can come from different places on the globe. However, you have to be careful here – remember that there are still many groups without access to new technologies and abilities to use them.

11.1. What kind of social projects can be done online?

The starting point in a realization of all social projects should be the target group. No matter if a social project will be implemented in direct contact or online. At the beginning, the group should conduct a needs assessment and afterwards decide on the subject of the project. In this order, ideas of activities are always a response to specific needs, which makes them better profiled and selected. It also helps participants to run their creativity in a specific direction and come up with new, original ideas.

To decide what can be done by this particular group of young people as a social project, it is also crucial to define team resources and identify participants' interests. If the project is to be successful it must be possible to implement it by the team and it should be interesting for them. Therefore, when you do an online social project, do not focus at the early beginning on what's possible on the internet. The Internet is only a tool. The most important are the needs of your target group and goals of the project. If your target group are seniors, ask them what they need. If you want to focus on promoting ecology, talk to experts and consult your ideas with them. And afterwards decide what should be done and then how to do it.

There are really many things that can be done by the internet. And definitely not all of them have already been invented. Therefore do not focus on known solutions, but think about them as inspiration to discover new ones.

Most popular types of e-volunteering:

- E-learning – e.g. language conversations,
- Online lectures and trainings – often connected with some practice, e.g. cooking,
- Knowledge accumulation – e.g. Wikipedia,
- Mapping of a given problem, phenomenon or objects,
- Crowdfunding – raising funds from a dispersed community, usually small amounts are paid,
- Collections of different products – e.g. collection of blankets and food to an animal shelter – or mechanism click-and-donate,
- Charity auctions for various purposes,
- Crowdsourcing – common problem solving and/or searching for new ideas,
- Providing support to those in need – people and animals,

- Citizen journalism – performed by non-professional journalists in the public interest, especially popular in regional media,
- Running discussion clubs – e.g. by libraries.

11.2. Collection of tips for online Service-learning based on our experiences

Online work is not that different from live work

If you want to organize a Service-learning project completely or partially online, the main thing will still be to follow all the principles and stages of the method. The methodology remains the same, only tools and a form of contact change.

Remember about team integration

When volunteers work online and they do not meet regularly in the office, at school or in any other place, but only online, it is much more difficult to integrate them and to build a bond between them. So you should really focus on team integration and create possibilities for it. If live meetings aren't possible or the team come from different and distant places you can use various options to help your group to get to know each other and to have fun online. It can be an online meeting with games, you can use some drama exercises or breakout rooms on Zoom for more private conversations between participants on given topics.

It's always a good idea to discuss the integration forms with a team. Young people will probably have many ideas on how to do it. After all, this is their normal way of functioning nowadays.

Create space for non-task contact

One of the main reasons for becoming a volunteer for young people is to make new friends and to get to know interesting people. This is also possible when you work online. Make it easier for young people by creating a space for non-task contact, where they could share their comments, ask different questions and even share memes – a space to be together in an informal way. It can be a group on Messenger or WhatsApp or any other internet messenger or suitable online form.

Clearly define forms and channels of communication

Communication in a team is always a challenge. When you work mainly online then it is even more demanding. If you clearly define forms and channels of communication at the beginning of a cooperation in your team, it will simplify the process. There are many applications which can be very useful, e.g. Zoom, Google Hangouts, Messenger, WhatsApp, Telegram, Skype. Remember that young people very often have knowledge and skills which can be very useful in this area so include the whole group and decide together.

Clearly define rules of work

At the beginning of the project, it is always important to clarify the rules of work. When you work online, it is even more important because the rules can be less intuitive. So do not forget not only to define forms of communication but also to set dates of meetings, tools, working time, and roles in the team.

The point is to work as a team, not alone

In online work, team members have less contact with each other, which can cause various difficulties, e.g. the flow of information can be impeded, solving problems may be difficult. Especially when participants close themselves in their areas and do not have enough contact with each other. So even working in front of the computer from home, each project participant should feel and act as a team member!

Motivation and sense of purpose

Your team can be really motivated at the beginning of the project; however, later in different project's stages and in different moments, e.g. after some difficulties or during long-term activities, the motivation of participants will change. It happens always in the project but when your team works mainly online the risk of lack of motivation is even bigger. Take care of the team's wellbeing, appreciate their work and pay attention to their needs. In chapter 2 you will find some specific ways to keep your team motivated.

As a youth worker, be flexible and open-minded

Youth workers and teachers who conduct Service-learning projects should be flexible, open-minded, relationship-oriented and willing to delegate duties and responsibilities to young people. They should observe the flow of information and processes in the group. Thanks to this, they will be able to choose or to help to choose the most effective tools for the project, also online tools.

Cloud, shared documents and other useful applications

It will be much easier to cooperate in a team if all of the participants will have access to the files with main project assumptions, distribution of tasks, results of the needs assessment etc. You can use a cloud to store the data (e.g. Google disk, Dropbox), you can conduct needs assessment and evaluation with online questionnaires, you can also share a calendar with all participants and use a project management application (e.g. Trello, Asana).

Internet security and data protection

It is very likely that in the project you will be transferring personal information to each other and store them. This kind of data always needs protection. Check how to collect personal information lawfully in your country and use the necessary data protection measures.

A detailed example of an online project implementation using service-learning methodology

Creating a city game about Warsaw

During the pandemic Children's University of Interesting History foundation had to move all the lectures and lessons to the internet. Because of it, the volunteering opportunities have been severely reduced. To give young people some other volunteering possibilities the foundation decided to form a group from among them to realize a Service-learning project in cooperation with The Volunteer Centre from Warsaw (as part of the EDUVOL project).

Five volunteers signed up to participate. All of them were connected with the foundation, but they didn't know each other before.

The first step after getting to know each other was to decide about the target group of the project and to conduct a needs assessment. They consulted the president of the Children's University of Interesting History and found out that there was no offer for whole families and usually parents and grandparents simply wait for their children and grandchildren in front of the classes. During the pandemic the problem disappeared, however, there was still no offer for whole families. The volunteers decided that they would change it. Before deciding what kind of offer it should be, they prepared a questionnaire to assess the needs of the families connected to the Children's University of Interesting History and used the foundation's mailing database to spread it. Unfortunately only a few people filled it. The group discussed what to do in such circumstances and decided that the best and easiest way would be to consult the matter with the president of the foundation and to rely on her experience and opinion.

After the second consultation the team decided to prepare a city game about Warsaw for families. Young people had many ideas about what the game should look like. They considered a one day event with an outdoor game in a park during the holidays, but finally they chose an option which could be available for a long time online. They planned a route for a long walk around Warsaw, which can be done in whole or in part. On the walking route the volunteers marked interesting places that have changed a lot over the years or even disappeared and were replaced by completely new ones. They also created a crossword puzzle connected with all the places from the route and opened an email address for these strollers who will fill the whole crossword and find the password. If somebody sends the password with some photos from the route, he or she gets a certificate.

Each volunteer from the team set herself/himself some educational goals, e.g. strengthening competences related to team work, socializing, planning and project management. The knowledge about Warsaw wasn't a goal for anyone, it became only a way to get some other skills and competences. To make the cooperation easier, one of the participants created a table in the Google documents with all the tasks, dates, deadlines and the tasks owners. The files with the ideas for the route, list of the places and their descriptions were created in an open access on Google disk so everybody from the team could edit them and add new ideas and comments. The group used Messenger to communicate between meetings, to set the meetings' dates and to consult on undertaken activities.

The team had a few meetings in the foundation's office at the beginning of the project but most of the meetings took place online on Zoom. Even if the group wasn't big it wasn't easy to meet (even online) all together. The group decided to continue their work on summer holidays and then setting the meetings and connecting from different places (like forests and foreign countries) became a real challenge. Because of it the project had to be postponed and the game was ready later than it was planned – in October.

The main role of the tutor in this project was monitoring the regularity of team's meeting and keeping track of the deadlines. The group was small and the involvement of the participants was not equal, which was another challenge. Also the group's motivation fluctuated and it was not easy to get the team together after holidays to finish the project. The evaluation of the project showed, however, that participants found it useful and that they learned quite a lot from it. For all of them it was the first time that they were involved in the long-term project and worked as a regular team from the beginning to the end.

To end and to sum up the project, the volunteers met again in the foundation's office. To celebrate the end of the project and their successes they decided to visit Norblin Factory – one of the places from their route which was recently renovated and opened – a huge building with cafes, restaurants, galleries and a cinema.

KEY CONCLUSIONS OF CHAPTER

- An online service-learning project is not much different than a no online one, the methodology stays the same.
- The needs assessment and the project goals have a priority over the ideas on online work. The internet is only a tool.
- The internet gives many volunteering possibilities and many of them haven't been discovered yet.

12. Good practice examples from EDUVOL project

I want to care about animals

Short description: Sandra has a health and social disadvantage associated with cerebral palsy. She graduated from the Associated School of Trade and Services - Horse Breeding Department in Slovakia. She spends most of her time in the apartment with her mother, who provides her care. At the beginning of the project, she wasn't very independent. She wasn't even able to pour some tea with a kettle. Sandra participated in a service-learning project, in which her task was to help take care of animals in the Zoo. The activities responded to the need to increase Sandra's independence from communicating with strangers, improve her manual and cleaning skills, and travel in urban public transport to places where she does not usually travel. While working at the ZOO, Sandra contacted six ZOO employees and temporary workers and gradually greeted customers from time to time. She learned to go to Zoo staff and temporary workers when she needed advice or help and explain what she needed. Sandra managed to travel independently to the Zoo in public transport.

Specific project benefits: Sandra's self-confidence has increased; she wants to work and continue her activities; during her project, she opened herself more and more to employees, addressed them by name, and asked them about work and non-work topics. She is more skilled, faster in action than initially; she is proud of herself, in her own words.

The staff confirmed that this experience was enjoyable for them. Gradually, they learned how to communicate with Sandra - put a veil down for a while, talk to her directly and articulate clearly.

Learning outcomes and implementation: Learning was aimed at improving communication with employees (greeting each other, perceiving the tasks they give her, coming to them when they do not understand something), being more and more independent in performing the tasks assigned to her, improving communication with customers, self-completion of activities, which she devoted herself, to be able to join the MDH on her own, to get off at the right stop, to walk safely to the ZOO herself.

Challenges and changes during the project: The challenge within the SL strategy for young people with disabilities was to adhere to the key characteristics of youth leadership. The worker left Sandra space to communicate with the employees; when she needed something from them, she arranged it herself. The challenge was also to leave more room for reflection after practice. To have even more time to think about what she has learned.

Quotes: *"I understand that young people with disabilities can say what they enjoy, what they would like to do and, with help and support, they can also specify what they want to learn."* - Youth worker

"I realized that even people with disabilities can work and that they are not a burden at all." - Employee in ZOO

#LakeTabacarieSuperheroes

Short description: The team of volunteers decided to take action against the pollution with plastic packaging of the lake Tabacarie. In the beginning of the project they needed to do a little research themselves, and then they developed creative information materials that were finally presented in public. During the project, the volunteers managed to learn a lot of valuable lessons on project implementation, assertive communication and active citizenship, while sharing their beliefs and putting their passions in action.

Specific project benefits: The volunteers were empowered to go through the whole project management process on their own, for the first time. They learned a lot of lessons along the way, and became more confident in their own abilities and role as an active citizen. The youth worker reported a greater appreciation of the Service-learning method and the importance of setting learning objectives, and said the volunteers now better understand how projects and activities are managed at the organization's level. 250 people from the community have been informed and sensitized to take better care of the lake and the environment.

Learning outcomes and implementation: The volunteers set out to learn how to develop and implement a project independently. They went together through all the steps of project management. They also wanted to be able to practice the principles of assertive communication, within the team as well as in public. Finally, they wanted to increase their capacity to act to solve community issues, and motivate others to do so as well.

Challenges and changes during the project: One of the biggest challenges was time management, and they managed to overcome it by staying flexible, trial and error, and fast solutions identified by discussion among the whole team. There were also some moments of shyness when it came to approaching the people on the street, but the volunteers were able to encourage each other and finally manage their emotions. The editing part of the informational video was not as easy as first thought, but the volunteers found out that the internet is filled with step by step lessons for everything. A challenge on a more personal level was keeping the levels of motivation and enthusiasm high throughout the project, especially when things didn't really go as planned. Flexibility and a realistic evaluation of the resources proved to be vital tools when tackling this.

Quotes: *"I learned how to work in a team, to actively listen to the opinions and ideas of others, to monitor the activities, to be aware of the deadlines. I learned how to create and implement a project, the techniques and tools we can use to systemize and easily clarify the project ideas."*

"Our youth worker has guided us throughout the project implementation, with advice, ideas, tools and motivation, encouraging us, in the end, to make the right decisions."

"In our future projects we would definitely set out more achievable objectives and look for more support in the community"

Videos of the project can be found on these links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Rc8-Fds9aQ>

https://youtu.be/_uIuT_rZtKA

International volunteer experience with children in the mountains.

Short description: Gabriel grew up in alternative care from the age of 3. He finished highschool and started his training as a social worker at college but he struggled finding his place and future passion. He tried different jobs but he did not feel he could perfectly fit in and he had difficulties securing stable accommodation which was dependent on his studies. He started volunteering for a local NGO going to international volunteer camps and eventually developing advanced English skills. When the Covid pandemic hit he had to postpone finishing his studies as there was no possibility to do his obligatory placement. When the opportunity came, the local NGO proposed to him to go on an international short-term voluntary project to Transylvania, Romania. He worked on setting the targets for his project with regard to its social impact and to his personal and professional development. During his project he worked with other young volunteers for 3 months in children's homes organizing mostly art workshops and teaching basic English. It was the first time that he lived abroad, and independently without direct, dedicated social support. The coordinator who helped him to participate in the project was trained in service-learning, involved him from planning to evaluation and had regular reflection sessions with him online. When Gabriel came back his self-confidence was boosted, he felt more independent, and decided to take a leadership role in a local volunteer project in Hungary, in which he coordinated other young people to help renovate a local community centre for youngsters.

Specific project benefits: Because of his upbringing Gabriel had little opportunity to master the skills necessary for independent living, including arranging supplies for himself and budget income. The project was the first time he had to plan his everyday life and he took the hurdles very well. Besides, he improved his facilitation skills, intercultural competences and found out that he had leadership skills. Other volunteers liked to work with him and appreciated his knowledge and insight into the situation of vulnerable children and the institutional context. The hosting NGO gave a lot of freedom in the sense of choosing what kind of activities could be done with children and were happy with the outcomes, especially the commitment of Gabriel and the group. Gabriel could also validate his experience in college, therefore this experience accounted for his academic advancement too.

Learning outcomes and implementation: The learning objectives included facilitation skills, independent living, foreign language skills and self-confidence. Gabriel achieved progress in all of these, moreover he managed to solve some emerging conflicts and tensions within the group. He also proved to be a great mediator between the children they worked with, the international group of volunteers and the hosting organization.

Challenges and changes during the project: The two main challenges were connected to the pandemic situation and living conditions during the project. Gabriel and the other volunteers had to adapt to changing regulations that affected their travel arrangements, leisure time plans and opportunities. Mostly it had an impact on the ways they could interact with and organize activities for the children. Through regular reflections, he realized the issues that raised tension and confusion. He decided to openly address and try to solve/find alternatives to them. The other challenge was that the volunteers' accommodation was not yet fully ready when they arrived, so sometimes they had to face the lack of hot water or proper heating. The sending organization tried to complain, nevertheless, it was the volunteers at the end, who organized it between themselves in a way that all could access the 'better' rooms. This challenge helped to show others Gabriel's constructive approach, solution-oriented attitude, and made him somehow a leader character in the group.

Quotes: *"It was the best place to experience all four seasons in 3 months. I taught English to kindergarten children in an afternoon school and in a local children's home, using the arts in a small village called Hărja, nestled in the beautiful Carpathian Mountains. The many smiling faces always gave me strength for the next day, even when I had very long days."*

"Along with all the tasks, there was time for fun and relaxation. I wouldn't have dared to take on this project without the help of my sending NGO, without the help of so many volunteers I knew there. They have supported me and will continue to support me all the way."

DIP GREEN

Short description: DIP GREEN is a project that encompasses all the goals of the service-learning method. The project involved young Youth Workers who, with their ideas, competencies and knowledge, with the support of mentors, shaped the activities that enrich the eco-garden of the Association for Research and Support (DIP)). The garden is a public area owned by the Municipality of Viškovo and is located in the center of the Municipality. At the same time, young people with disabilities and problems in psychosocial functioning were included, who achieved an equal position with other young volunteers through an inclusive volunteering program.

Specific project benefits: A quality support network has been created among the participants, thus increasing trust and solidarity between different groups. The local community is enriched with quality space for socializing. Also, young youth workers had the opportunity to experience on the spot the importance of including people with fewer opportunities - their peers. The joint work of all participants resulted in an enriched garden, richer in new plants, flowers and fruits that will bloom in the spring. In the process of working and carrying out project activities, the connection between Youth Workers and young people with disabilities and problems in psychosocial functioning was strengthened, and a sense of community and contribution to a healthier life was created.

Learning outcomes and implementation: Concrete new knowledge and skills have been acquired that are very important for young people, Youth Workers and young people with disabilities in everyday life, and mutual interaction has resulted in the development of social, cognitive and motor skills in young people with disabilities but also for young people working with other young people. Youth Workers had the opportunity to strengthen all 8 key competences for lifelong learning: communicating and working together with DIP in a customized way (social and civic competences), meeting, socializing and working with volunteers from other countries (eg USA) and communicating in a foreign language, improving digital competencies (web and Facebook posts, agreements and Zoom meetings), learning how to learn and apply what is learned in direct work with others, developing a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship through planning and self-implementation of garden development projects “ideas” to “realization” with supervision, development of creativity respecting permacultural principles in garden design and maintenance.

Challenges and changes during the project: During the implementation of activities within the project “DIP GREEN” we encountered several challenges and obstacles. At the very beginning, the main obstacle was the transport of volunteers and DIP members to the eco garden, since it is located in Viškovo. However, we managed to partially solve this obstacle with transport financed by SMART. Furthermore, since the project was planned in an open area (garden), we depended on the weather and we had to organize and arrange meetings in accordance with the weather forecast. Therefore, we held one meeting in the premises of the organization. At one of the meetings in the garden, it was raining and it was difficult to carry out activities. But in the end we managed to do everything according to the given and agreed plan. Another challenge was the agreement of the project participants (volunteers, i.e. Youth Workers) to go to DIP’s garden. Given faculty commitments, at times it was difficult to reconcile a term that would suit everyone. Consequently, not all volunteers could be present at the meetings. An additional challenge is the preparation and education of volunteers, in working with people with disabilities and problems in psychosocial functioning. It is important to learn the basic processes in learning and teaching methods, to adjust the way of communication and information transfer when working with our beneficiaries. Creating and maintaining social interactions and facilitating participation in each of the collaborative processes is a challenging job for the program and project manager and coordinator. Continuous supervision is needed at all stages in order to achieve the goals of individual activities, but also the well-being of everyone involved. Only through proactive work, continuous cooperation with frequent individual and group conversations, volunteers, beneficiaries, professional associates and the project manager can achieve the set goals together. This is also evident in the quote.

Quotes: *“We are satisfied with the fact that we now have an additional garden in which several types of flowers, fruit trees, berries and medicinal plants have been planted that we can use for our needs. This is only part of the results we have achieved because after all, the most important thing is what we have achieved by creating our garden; and that is the connection between us young people, the friendships we have created, the knowledge we have gained, but also what we have passed on to others.”*

Ideas Navigator

Short description and specific project benefits: Bednarska School regularly cooperates with a local foundation which helps people from the Powiśle district in Warsaw. At the beginning of the school year 2021/2022 students contacted the foundation and asked how they could help this year. It occurred that the foundation needed money to pay for the bus to help small children from poor families from the district to get to primary school and day-care centre after school, so the most needed help was to collect the money. It was a real challenge for the students/pupils and it showed them that they didn't know how to do it. That was the beginning of Ideas Navigator. Jan Baran, Piotr Borys, Mateusz Malicki and Antonina Petryka got the idea to create a kind of manual for other students from the school on how to collect money for social activities. At the beginning they didn't plan a website but during consultations with friends from the school and teachers they decided that it would be the best way to spread the knowledge even to a wider audience.

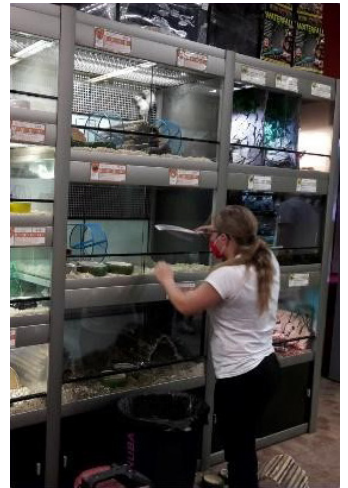
To collect the ideas on fundraising methods which could be used by minors the team contacted many different people – especially representatives of the foundations cooperating with the school, school graduates, ex-volunteers and activists. It helped them to create quite a big collection of ideas. One of the graduates supported the group in creating the website and he lent them free access to the website builder program.

The team worked together. Jan, Tonia, Mateusz and Piotr often stayed longer at school to work on the project, but many of their meetings with other people took place online because of the pandemic. The group got support to develop the idea from the school, the Volunteer Centre from Warsaw and the Inkubator Pomysłów (inkubatorpomyslow.org.pl). After the live presentation of the project before the audience Ideas Navigator was chosen as one of the innovative projects and Jan, Tonia, Mateusz and Piotr received support from Inkubator Pomysłów – professional trainings, consultations and mentoring.

Learning outcomes:

- Ability to do research
- Gaining knowledge how to raise funds
- Public speaking competencies
- Establishing business contacts
- Soft skills development
- Team work
- Creating plain and interesting presentations
- Creating websites

I want to care about animals



#LakeTabacarieSuperheroes



International volunteer experience with children in the mountains



13. Information about EDUVOL partners

Platform of volunteer centres and organizations (Slovakia) was established in August 2011 and the main goal of the Platform is to support the creation of environment favorable for the development of volunteering in all areas and its forms. The Platform unites volunteer centres and organizations working with volunteers in Slovakia and fulfills its aims through following activities: building the infrastructure of volunteering ; advocating for legal and economic support of volunteer centres and volunteer involving organizations; enforcing financial support for volunteering; incorporating volunteering into the legal framework that would lead toward its support, supporting the establishment and the development of a working position of volunteer coordinators within non-governmental and public organizations/institutions, promoting volunteering as a tool for informal education; and enforcing volunteering as a preparation tool for the labor market.

Contacts:

www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk

platforma@dobrovolnickecentra.sk

Pro Vobis - National Resource Center for Volunteering (Romania) exists to promote and develop volunteerism as a viable and irreplaceable resource in solving the problems the Romanian society is now facing. Pro Vobis was established in 1992 as a social services organization. Following the experience and expertise acquired in effectively managing the volunteers, Pro Vobis decided to establish the first Volunteer Center in the country as a department of the organization in 1997. The unexpected demand for services and know-how in the field of volunteer management urged Pro Vobis to change the mission accordingly and become the first independent and professional Volunteer Center in Romania, contributing substantially to promoting and developing the concept of a volunteer center in our country. At its 5th anniversary, in 2002, the organization became The National Volunteer Center Pro Vobis and now it is the National Resource Center for Volunteering, showing within its name the role it plays in the Romanian non-governmental sector and celebrating almost 30 years of existence. We work with: NGOs willing and able to involve volunteers, practitioners who work with volunteers, public institutions that can support volunteerism, socially responsible companies, mass-media.

Contacts:

www.provobis.ro

provobis@provobis.ro

Association for Civil Society Development SMART (Croatia) a non-for profit organization was established in July 1999 and is led by a team of professional trainers/consultants with a large amount of experience in the Croatian non-profit sector. SMART encourages efficiency and efficacy of non-profit sector and intersectoral cooperation, and promotes volunteering. SMART connects non-formal education with counseling, informing and influencing public policy. SMART cooperates with civil society organizations, public institutions, local and regional government, and civic initiatives based on the principles of responsibility, active involvement and respect of differences. SMART implements OK2015 – quality assurance system for civil society organizations in Croatia, quality assurance system for Volunteer Centres in Croatia and quality assurance system for Volunteer Programmes for non-profit organizations. SMART through its work strengthens non-profit organizations (civil society organizations, public institutions in different areas of work, local government) while at the same time developing a multi-stakeholder approach (CSOs, public institution, local/state government and business) thus contributing to the development of civil society in Croatia.

Contacts:

www.smart.hr

smart@smart.hr

ÖKA (Hungary) was founded in 2002 as an independent NGO with the aim to develop and coordinate all efforts for a better environment for volunteering and to foster community participation in Hungary. In the past years it coordinated many local, national and international projects in the area of volunteer

development and training. ÖKA coordinates the Volunteer Centre Network that incorporates regional volunteer Centres from all over the country. Being an umbrella organization in Hungary ÖKA has nationwide contacts and it is a major player in civil society and volunteer development in Hungary. It has vast cooperation records with NGOs, governmental bodies and the corporate world. Next to its traditional development work and services (www.oka.hu, promotion, advocacy and legislative development of volunteering, volunteer management training pool, Volunteer Centre Network development, inclusion and competence development projects, senior volunteering, Volunteering Award and publishing) ÖKA built up complex corporate volunteer service programmes. For better quality programs ÖKA provides volunteer management training as a accredited training institution for any hosting organizations/institutions that is willing to improve such program operation. ÖKA strongly believes in the impact volunteers have and concentrates all its efforts on improving the conditions for volunteers through better legislation, quality volunteer programs and more financial means for hosting organizations. ÖKA was a key player in Hungary in the implementation of activities in the frame of the European Year of Volunteering.

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Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wolontariatu (Poland) was established in 1993. The primary objective of the Association is the promotion and development of civil society in local communities. In order to ensure a professional character of such initiatives, we have been building the foundations of volunteering based on a system of volunteer recruitment and training. The Centre has established and develop volunteering programmes as: Volunteering in Welfare Centres, Volunteering at schools, Employee Volunteering, The network of Volunteer Centres, The Voluntary Job Exchange Office, Trainings and seminars in volunteering, Promotional campaigns, On-line platform to join volunteers and organizations, Seniors Volunteering, Long-time Volunteering, The Warsaw City Volunteering, Volunteering Library. The Volunteer Centre serves as a unique support hub for non-governmental organizations and public institutions in the scope of: organizing programmes with the participation of volunteers, conducting training sessions for volunteer coordinators, providing legal consultations, developing and implementing volunteer work development strategies in local communities.

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