SCHOLA

Be
a Volunteer,
Succeed
at School

Schola - a pedagogical approach
to value volunteering

Erasmus+

Schola—Be a Volunteer, Succeed at School

CONTENTS

Introduction

Mojca Kovačič, Dan Podjed

In this book, we present the results of a two-year project, titled *Schola: Be a Volunteer, Succeed at School.* The project was carried out by partners in five European countries with the financial support of the EU Erasmus+ programme. The project addressed young people and mentors and helped them understand the importance of non-formal and informal education, supported by volunteering, in preventing early school leaving. In this way, the project team put special attention on recognising the key competences that young people acquire through their voluntary work. The initial goal of the project was to test ideas and concepts at the local levels – to see which approaches are the most appropriate in a certain country, socio-cultural framework and even on a micro-level of schools and other institutions involved in the project. Their representatives provided us with constant feedback on the work process, which was used to (co)create the tools and methods for our project. In this manner, the project outputs were not prepared just *for* the people, but instead *with* the people. On the basis of the cooperation with mentors and on the foundations of transnational cooperation of the project partners, special guidelines were created to help both teachers in schools and educators outside schools in discovering, recording and evaluating the competences that young people acquire through volunteer experience. Consequently, their experiences are evaluated and a bridge is built between formal and non-formal education in the school system. Detailed information on the project work steps can be found on the project website www.schola-erasmus.eu. However, with this publication in the form of a separate e-publication, we wanted to address a wider audience: from young people, teachers, mentors, to policy-makers at the national or

European levels. With this book, we wanted to introduce new methods, which were thoroughly tested in the project, into the existing systems of education.

The book consists of contributions from all project partners involved in the project. Benjamin Arino, Principal of Collège Blaise Pascal, who was also the leader of the project consortium, provides introductory words stemming from his positive experience of the project implementation at his school. His chapter is followed by a theoretical contribution, written by Wouter Smets, a Belgian educational researcher, who presents key points to understand the role of the formal school in preventing early school leaving. These key points include, for example, a response of teachers to the diversity in the classroom and the use of individualised learning strategies, such as differentiated instructions and cultural-responsive teaching. If such strategies are combined with the evaluation of competences acquired outside the formal education system, this can lead to a successful educational path that has a potential for creating educational equality within the formal education system. The next theoretical contribution, co-authored by Bénédicte Halba and Marco Bertolucci, emphasises the importance of volunteering beyond the generational frameworks of the Schola project. It shows that the pedagogical approaches and methods developed by the project team can be useful in evaluating competences of the older generation. Their statements are supported by studies that evaluate the psychological and cognitive dimensions of voluntary activities.

The following chapters of the book are contributions from individual countries – Belgium, France, Italy, Poland and Slovenia. Through the presented methods and results of the implementation of the Schola approach, the texts provide a broader overview of the organisation of educational and voluntary context in each country. In their contributions, the partners also present the obstacles, advantages and challenges they had to face during their work. The texts also give direct feedbacks from participants in the project – teachers, mentors or students who were "caught in the act", i.e. during their activities, and therefore provide an interesting view on the situation "from the other side", i.e. from the side of the projects' stakeholders and people involved in the process.

Based on the work in five countries, namely five specific locations, we managed to create a common European educational and social strategy that will hopefully assist people who are already working in this field, but need additional theoretical or practical assistance in their work. The e-book is also prepared for those who are interested in the integration

of alternative pedagogical approaches into the existing school systems. The results of the *Schola* project demonstrate how different the school systems are in the various partner countries in the European Union and, above all, that the integration of new pedagogical approaches into the existing system requires effort which brings very positive results.

At the end, the project team kindly thanks the mentors, educators, teachers and students who facilitated the *Schola* project team's efforts in creating a successful educational tool for contemporary and future societies within and beyond the EU.
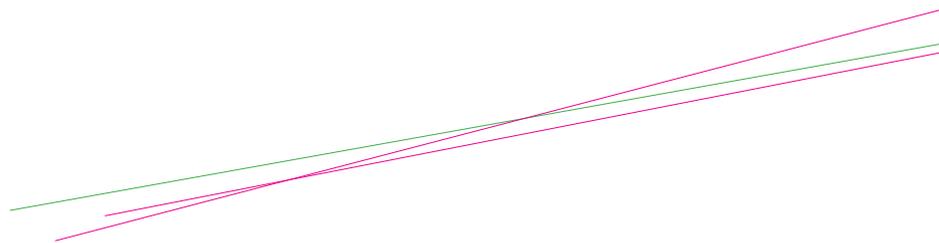
Schola: Getting Closer to the Spirit of Fraternity

Benjamin Arino

The Schola project worked on the ambitious assumption that school success is linked to the mobilisation of specific competences that are not systematically identified, acknowledged nor used in school. This project was financed by the EU Erasmus+ programme. For two years, it brought together a multidisciplinary team of researchers, teachers and a head teacher located in France, Belgium, Italy, Slovenia and Poland. The volunteer working is a form of commitment to society and it is based on the liberty of each individual to participate in different projects that bring social benefit to others. Volunteer working though requires the development and the mobilization of key competences related to informal learning. As a result, it contributes to becoming a responsible citizen, it provides food for thought when educational and vocational choices must be made and, finally, it also fosters artistic and cultural education. The pupils' commitment inside and outside of school on a voluntary basis allows them to learn and develop new competences that will help them to be successful in school.

How to identify these competences? How can teachers link these competences that are mobilised through informal learning with those mobilised through formal learning?

The tools that the European team of the Schola project developed in two years were built to help us answer these questions. These tools that have been developed collaboratively are meant to be used by all kinds of instructors – social mobilizers, teachers, trainers who train teachers … Thanks to the contributions of Italian, Belgian, Slovenian, Polish and French teams, the reader will be able to find all the elements

needed to understand the specific situations of each country and to identify and acknowledge the mobilised competences.

In the long run, the students themselves will become aware of their skills, competences and knowledge and will be able to reinvest them into more formal learning processes. This way, with the mobilisation of competences through extracurricular projects and, in particular, volunteer working, we hope to fight against school dropout or, to put it in a more positive way, to boost school perseverance which is a key success factor.

Hence, we hope that these tools will contribute to better working conditions for teachers and pupils, which then might result in the development of a society based on openness to others, altruism, diversity and equal opportunities. In the end, they could help us get closer to the spirit of fraternity.
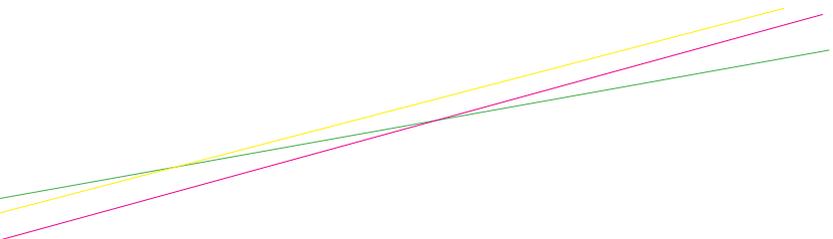
Bridging Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Education to Tackle Early School Leaving

Wouter Smets

INTRODUCTION

The fight against early school leaving (ESL) is a common challenge for all professionals engaged in equitable education. In order to tailor educational pathways to students' needs, different approaches have been advocated. The aim of such approaches is generally to adapt teachers' instructional processes in the classroom. This, however, may not be sufficient: the rates of ESL remain high across many countries in the European Union. Professionals outside school can be engaged to bridge formal learning at school and non-formal learning. A validation of competences acquired through non-formal learning could foster the educational careers of students at risk of academic failure. This e-book reports on the Schola project that aims to tackle ESL by bridging the gap between formal, non-formal and informal education. Teachers were trained to recognize and validate competences that students had developed outside school. A particular focus was laid on competences that students developed through voluntary action. Current section theoretically reflects on the rationale for such an approach.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS
TO PREVENT EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

The challenge to organize education for all becomes increasingly difficult in urban areas across Europe. Although ESL has been a priority of the European Commission for more than a decade now, the number of students dropping out of school before they were appropriately trained to access the labor market remains high. The share of early leavers from education and training in the EU should be no more than 10% by 2020, but the reality in many European member states is different (Eurostat 2017). Without official certification through diplomas, these students face many difficulties throughout their professional careers.

ESL therefore remains a matter of concern for educational policy makers across Europe. For more than a decade, educational policy agenda is now dominated by the ambition to provide educational equity for all, and specifically to organize school systems in order to assure qualification of as much students as possible. Educational systems throughout Europe are characterized by high rates of ESL throughout many European countries (Schleicher 2011, Schleicher 2013). A plethora of reasons is suggested to address this problem. For a long time, psychological factors at student level were seen as the main reasons why students did not successfully complete their school (Marks, McMillan 2001). The European agenda noted for instance: learning difficulties, social factors or a lack of motivation (Commission 2011). Now educational curricula are also increasingly viewed to contribute to ESL (McGarr 2010). Educational systems are by consequence supposed to prevent and react to this phenomenon. Suggestions for approaches can be situated at both micro-level (classroom strategies, teacher-student interaction) at meso-level (school policy and local educational policy) or at macro-level (regional and national policy). In this project, we focus on opportunities that a micro- and meso-level approach (Bronfenbrenner 1977) may yield for tackling the problem of ESL. Suggestions are made to adjust educational curricula to individual students' needs in order to tackle ESL (Schleicher 2013). Individualizing educational pathways is seen by the European Commission as one the main targets to prevent ESL. This is why schools are challenged to adjust their curricula.

INDIVIDUALISED LEARNING:
THE NEED FOR DATA-DRIVEN TEACHER DECISION-MAKING

Over the last decade, two major strategies have been proposed that enable teachers to respond to diversity in the classroom and by consequence to adapt the curriculum to the needs of individual students. First, we elaborate on the idea of differentiated instruction. Second, we detail on the idea of cultural-responsive teaching. Tomlinson et al. (2003) attracted a lot of attention with the suggestion for teachers to organize differentiated instruction. The idea of this approach is that teachers tailor instruction to students' needs based on readiness level, interest or learning profile. For students threatened by ESL, such an approach could work preventively, as the idea of differentiated instruction is that formative assessment is to inform teachers on what a student or a group of students really needs. Hence, this vital information can be used to tailor instruction to what a student really needs to be successful at school. This idea of the ethical compass of teachers (Tomlinson 2010) is crucial to understand the potential of differentiated instruction to tackle ESL. Teachers in a differentiated classroom have high expectations of their students (Denessen, Douglas 2015, Smets 2017) and they invest in ongoing assessment of their students' learning (Hall 2006, Smets 2017).

Another suggestion that partially overlaps differentiated instruction is to engage with culturally-responsive teaching (Gay 2002). Whereas the idea of differentiated instruction is focused on adaptive instructional design, culturally-responsive teaching is more focused on the responsivity of the relation between students and teachers. The idea is that teachers need to be aware of their own and their students' cultural sensitivities. The approach is by consequence essentially dialogic (Alexander 2015, Kumpulainen, Rajala 2017). Building on students' cultural sensitivities, teachers are supposed to adapt their dialogical interactions. Teachers are supposed to see the potential growth of their students and to adapt their approach to the needs of diverging groups of students or individual students (Miskovic, Curcic 2016, Savage et al. 2011).

Although both approaches have attracted a lot of attention, the challenge to provide equitable educational opportunity for all is growing bigger ever since. A crucial determinant for teachers to be able to practice both of these types of individualized educational approaches is that they need to be able to relate to their students. Differentiated instruction is grounded on an ongoing process of student assessment

that informs teachers' decision-making with regard to their instructional design (Smets 2017). Cultural-responsive teaching is based on teachers' profound knowledge of students' individualities and a willingness to invest in dialogical relations to learn more about students' relevant learning needs (Erstad et. al 2016, Severiens et al. 2014). This characteristic that grounds both differentiated instruction and cultural-responsive education marks a decisive risk factor of both strategies. Without the appropriate information to ground teachers' instructional design or teachers' responsive acts in classroom, the outcome of both strategies risks to be detrimental for students. It is often stated how students with vulnerable socio-cultural background are at risk of stereotype threat (James 2012, Steel, Aronson 1995, Villenas, Deyhle 1999). It may be concluded that individualized educational trajectories have a large potential to tackle the problem of ESL. However, the practice of such pedagogy is highly ambitious. Without data-driven information on students' learning needs, differentiated instruction or culturally-responsive education risks confirming stereotypes instead of responding adequately to students' learning needs. In the next section, we propose to bridge non-formal education and formal education in order to fill this information gap.

BRIDGING INFORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION

Classic educational systems are focused on formal learning. According to Unesco "formal learning occurs as a result of experiences in an education or training institution, with structured learning objectives, learning time and support, leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective" (Jang 2015: 9). ESL involves primarily the end of learning activities in formal schooling before a student has been officially certified for qualification. For professionals in education it is, however, a common misconception that formal education is the only source of learning that could lead do certification. For more than a decade now, educational policies are also focusing on the role of non-formal learning and its advantages for students at risk of academic failure.

Unesco defines it as follows: "Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional

from the learner's perspective" (Jang 2015: 9). Non-formal or informal learning consequently does not only happen at school, but may also occur outside the borders of classic educational institutions. It could emerge in the context of a range of voluntary engagements or leisure activities. Classic non-formal learning activities include training of sports coaches and youth workers or training destined at voluntary staff in the cultural field. Although the value of non-formal learning has been established for many years (Eraut, 2000), the academic study of youngsters' non-formal learning remains relatively new. However, educational policy makers worldwide have called for the role of lifelong learning, also non-formal learning, to foster educational equity for all (Jang 2015). The role of the validation of this type of learning is pivotal to tackle the problems associated with ESL. In the EU, the validation of non-formal or informal learning is a key element in national lifelong learning strategies developed by member states (Union 2012). This validation is often focused on promoting access to the labor market of drop-out students. In addition to such a reactive policy, we argue here for a proactive policy that aids to preventing ESL.

Bridging the gap between competences acquired and validated through non-formal learning and individual trajectories of students (at risk) within formal education may foster educational equity. The validation of non-formal learning activities may well serve in proactively fostering success at school for students at risk of ESL. By validating non-formal learning and by bridging the gap between these non-formal learning activities, students' career at school may prosper. It is the aim of the Schola project to explore the conditions for such a bridge between non-formal learning outside of school and formal learning in school. First, a tool to validate competences acquired through voluntary action was developed. Second, a mentoring for teachers to apply these validated competences in a context of classic formal education was developed.

CONCLUSION

The challenge to develop educational pathways that are tailored to the heterogeneity of groups of students is one of the great endeavors for educational practice. The educational sciences are to inform such practice in order to enable more equitable educational opportunity for all. In particular, with regard to ESL, teachers and schools are challenged to tailor educational pathways. The validation of competences that students acquire outside of school could provide high-yielding

opportunities for all professionals inside and outside of school to practice data-informed decisions on tailoring educational pathways to student's individual needs. Bridging the gap between formal, non-formal and informal education has therefore the potential to gradually increase educational equity.
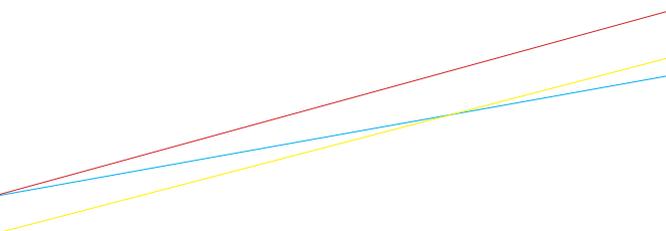
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Volunteering – Bridging the Generation Gap

Bénédicte Halba, Marco Bartolucci

INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is no more a marginal phenomenon. According to the data of the European Value Systems Study Group, one European out of four was involved in volunteer activity already in 1990 (European 2015). In 1981, a first survey included twenty-nine countries, in 1990, there were forty countries. The main idea behind the network was to study whether Europeans shared common values to study their impact on the European construct. The proportion has not changed much as in 2011, there were between ninety-two and ninety-four million adults involved in volunteering in the twenty-seven countries of the European Union. This in turn implies that around 22% to 23% of Europeans over fifteen years of age are engaged in volunteer work (GHK 2009). Europeans are concerned by volunteering in all fields of social life: sports and leisure, health, social services, culture, environment, human rights, consumption …

The Schola project addresses youngsters aged 14 to 16 years living in sensitive areas who might be faced with Early School Leaving (ESL). The suggested pedagogical process – a portfolio for youngsters combined with a mentoring for professionals working with them – may be extended to a wider audience. This would be a challenging way to bridge the generational gap as the elderly would take advantage of their previous professional life (ex-post approach) and the youth would build a professional future (ex-ante approach). The intergenerational perspective seems appropriate in a lifelong learning approach as volunteering is a place to acquire competences (for youngsters) and to organize a transmission of competences (for seniors). In a psychological and cognitive approach, numerous studies have highlighted the possible

gain effects for those who undertake voluntary activities, whatever the age enhancing a resilience process thanks to empowerment.

YOUTH AND SENIOR VOLUNTEERING

Youth Volunteering: Young volunteers are not the most numerous among the population of volunteers as this is usually Europeans aged between 35 and 55 years who are more involved. Nevertheless, more and more youngsters are involved in the voluntary activity or at least concerned by volunteering even if it has sometimes an image problem among the younger generation (Gaskin 1998). Since in Europe the average levels of education are rising, the numbers of people willing to volunteer should also increase: it appears that higher levels of education are correlated to higher rates of participation in voluntary organizations. (Mestheneos 1998). More than one student out of four integrates volunteering in his/her future (Friis Molin 2001). In 2011, the proportion did not change much – it included even more of the population if we include the "non -formal" volunteers – youngsters who volunteer outside associations.

If volunteering is still elitist, it may be a fundamental step for all young people to prepare their future social and professional lives. For youngsters who did not continue their studies, volunteering is less easy or suffers from a bad image. Nevertheless, it can be much more decisive for the future: feeling useful to the community, meeting people they would not have had the chance to meet in their family or social lives. Volunteering needs to offer opportunities to take on stimulating work, to develop skills, to explore different careers and to get work experience. If instrumental motivations are not new, they appear to be increasing rapidly among young people (Gaskin1998).

In times when studies are longer and entering the labor market is more difficult (i.e. unemployment rates are higher in the younger population), by becoming involved in voluntary experiments, young people enrich their backgrounds, apart from their previous education or background. Sometimes a voluntary involvement may be the first step for a professional career. It may also be a way to test if a field of activity would be relevant and re-engage them in studies or training, especially for the so-called Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) youngsters (Halba 2014).

Concerning youth volunteering, the European Commission has led a very positive action with the European voluntary service for youngsters since 1996. New forms of 'proximity volunteering' have been developed in several countries: in the United Kingdom, over 3000 community service volunteers aged 16–35 years, full-time volunteers, volunteer for people who need their help in social, environmental or cultural projects. In the United States, the service learning is a way to provide young people with the opportunities and benefits of voluntarism in the specific fields of illiteracy and environment. In France, several opportunities have been offered to youngsters with the end of the military service (2002) with a variety of missions suggested to youngsters aged 16–25 years who are involved in a civic volunteering (Service 2018).

Many tools and strategies have been designed in order to value this experience, especially to express it in competences. The pioneer European project VAEB (Assessing a Voluntary experience), which was conducted in 7 EU countries, between 2003 and 2006, designed a portfolio for voluntary competences. It has been the touchstone for many other tools and strategies both in France (i.e. Passeport bénévole, France bénévolat 2007) or other portfolios such as in the Netherlands or Belgium. On this basis, the European Year of Volunteering stated in 2011, in a communication published by the European Commission, that "recognition of the competences and skills gained through volunteering as non-formal learning experiences is essential as a motivating factor for the volunteers and one that creates bridges between volunteering and education" (Commission 2011). Later, other pedagogical tools and strategies have been designed updating the pioneer VAEB portfolio, such as the training designed for youngsters aged 16–35 years under the JuCiVol Erasmus+ project (2016–2018), which is focused on two specific key competences: Social and civic competences (KC6) and Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (KC7). The bridge between Volunteering and the competence approach has been stronger and stronger and used as an alternative pedagogy for youngsters faced with difficulties in school.

Senior Volunteering: Demographic change in volunteering, as in the European societies in general, is not seen as a challenge but as a threat. Volunteer organisations, researchers and media have tried to change the perspective to present a more dynamic approach to volunteering involving all ages. The intergenerational aspect has become a main concern. A new issue about senior volunteering came up during the last three decades with more and more seniors leaving paid employment in good health and in a mood for being active.

Early retirement schemes combined with high unemployment rates among older staff members lead to a situation where many people leave the employment sector in their early fifties: either they get retired early or – as woman returners or older unemployed people – they give up the idea of returning into paid employment, as they realize the chances for this are very poor. These people are called seniors because we do not have any other appropriate expression for people beyond employment, but they are definitely too young to be really called seniors. This group looks forward to a phase of – on the average – 15 to 20 years in a healthy condition and with a high potential for activity. Many of the early retirees live in good economic conditions and therefore are not very likely to look for paid work in their retirement phase.

Social protection systems in many European countries are still based on the so-called inter-generational-treaty. There is no capital stock to pay for the pensions of retired people built up from their contributions, but the contributions of the younger generations are used to pay for the seniors. Due to changes in the age structure of the population and the rise in life expectation fewer young people have to pay for more older ones. So more and more frequently the problems of social security systems are addressed in terms of an 'age burden' of society.

To prevent intergenerational conflicts and to improve the social climate between old and young, it seems to be a good idea to show that the older generation can still make a considerable contribution to public welfare – by volunteering. Another reason to promote senior volunteering is plainly the vast volume of unused resources. The proportion of early retirees with a high degree of education and professional skill rises from year to year as a result of the expansion of higher education that started in the sixties. Therefore, more and more early retirees have not only time but also the skills and knowledge that might be useful for volunteering. Moreover, as many early retirees did not really leave their jobs by their free will, as they were more or less forced to do so by their employers and also by younger colleagues, they are interested to somehow go on with what they did before, either in a very similar way or by using these skills for targets very different from the ones they had to follow before. The contact with younger generations is a main reason for seniors to volunteer.

On the other hand, it can be observed that in most contexts where all age groups are addressed or represented, seniors are marginalized: issues related to employment and professional training tend to play a big role, but are no longer of interest to seniors. Some seniors nevertheless prefer to work in contexts, where all age groups are represented. But it can be increasingly observed that senior volunteers form initiatives of their own and choose their procedures and working fields in relation to the life situation and the demands they have in common.

Time is an important factor in all social services working directly with clients – time to deal with individual cases, time for personal communication beyond care and service provision. As time of paid staff is scarce and expensive, older volunteers could be asked to join in here. Older volunteers could provide professional expertise from their former paid employment for voluntary initiatives and associations. What could help the initiatives but is far too expensive to buy on the market, could be provided by competent senior volunteers with very specific professional profiles such as lawyers, controllers, computer or public relation experts (Halba, Strümpel, Schumacher 2001).

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE GAINS OF VOLUNTEERING – FROM YOUNGSTERS TO THE ELDERLY

There are numerous studies that have highlighted possible gain effects in various psychological and cognitive dimensions of those who undertake voluntary activities. If we analyse the benefits of volunteer experience according to various age groups, we can more or less identify different but often interrelated dimensions, which are subject to empowerment depending on whether the subject is in an age group included in the adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood and finally, the third age. Volunteering during adolescence, when aged between 12 and 18 years, has been related to lowest rates of illegal behaviours, arrests and convictions in adulthood. A retrospective study revealed an 11% decrease of illegal behaviour, 31% fewer arrests and 39% fewer sentences for those who had carried out volunteering activities in comparison with others aged between 18 and 28 years who had not.

The age range 24–34 years has 28% less illegal behaviour, 53% fewer arrested people and 36% fewer sentences (Ranapurwala et. al 2016). A qualitative research has been carried out with four persons who survived the earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and who were the subjects meeting precise requirements: being the citizens of Haiti, at least 18 years old, who survived the earthquake, had been trained by the Healt Support Team program (HST) and had been volunteers for at least six months. The HST program was established to train local volunteers who

would have then been able to provide support to society. The sample of the study consists of four young people aged between 28 and 37, three of whom were university students at the time of the earthquake.

Although it is a study with a limited and particular sample composed of survivors, the analysis of the interviews of the volunteers highlights that experiencing volunteering even in these circumstances is related to an improvement in the resilience and coping. Interviews do not measure the self-efficacy, but nevertheless, the ability to find new goals in their life and a hope to be a co-protagonist in the change that they can bring to the others are the concepts closely linked to self-efficacy dimension (Carlile et. al 2014).

We can therefore begin to define the main effects in the first of the three age groups taken into consideration. In adolescence and young adulthood, according to literature, the subjects seem to benefit not only in what concerns learning and competences, but also with regard to the fundamental psychological dimensions for building their own personalities and the ability to cope with obstacles and challenges of life as resilience, perceived self-efficacy, coping and management of complex problems (Batini Bartolucci, under review). By beginning early, such benefits increase during the course of life.

For example, a study examining data supplied by 288 different volunteering organisations tried to identify how some of the basic skills of volunteers are influenced at an international level. The main question was to understand how the duration of volunteering service, the ability of volunteers and the group size influence the organisational skills, the development of relations and the manual work. With regards to the level of competence, the qualified volunteers, regardless of the time involved in volunteering activities, are more effective in the organisational ability and have a higher motivation. The unqualified volunteers, however, have more basic skills, but these are also effective in order to be able to perform the tasks required by the association. The more expert volunteers are more effective in building relationships. (Lough and Tiessen 2018).

In adulthood, the gains of the different dimensions continue and the result is the empowerment of the overall mental and physical wellbeing. 2,990 residents in Victoria, Australia, were interviewed to analyse the possible positive relations between volunteering and wellbeing. Volunteers and non-volunteers were distinguished by means of a direct question which investigated this aspect in the interview: 43.5% of the sample was composed of volunteers and the remaining 56.5% of non-volunteers. The results obtained from the analysis of the data support the initial research assumptions. Volunteers feel better, have a better general sense of self-efficacy, greater social connectivity and a higher level of self-esteem in comparison with the group of non-volunteers, and therefore the general sense of self-efficacy, social connectivity and self-esteem can be considered as the principal mediators of the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing (Brown et al. 2012). By comparing the levels of mental wellbeing of adults involved in the volunteering experiences and adults who never participated, it is possible to identify an important difference: the first group reaches the highest levels. Those who regularly carry out volunteering experiences have higher levels of mental well-being, especially after turning 40, and it is so even during the old age (Tabassum 2016).

Volunteering for others, providing services to those in need of aid, driven by altruism or humanitarian concerns, contributes to developing authentic and real relationships and favours social integration. This type of volunteering is more related to beneficial effects than the self-oriented volunteering activities, intended as research for one's own benefits and improvements through relations with others. Both types are related to significant benefits for health, but in different percentages. More precisely, there have been improvements in mental health of 8.54% in the first case and of 6.50% in the self-oriented type. The improvement in physical health is 9.08% in volunteering for others and 7.14% in the self-oriented type and percentages of satisfaction with life are respectively 7.35% and 3.66% whereas in the case of social wellbeing they are 11.11% and 5.44%. In the first case, there is also a decrease of 4.30% in depressive symptoms. A greater participation in volunteering activities, even in different tasks at the same time, is beneficial for the health of the subject. The volunteering oriented towards others is characterized by more reliable interpersonal relationships and a more stable support network (Yeung et al. 2017).

In a Japanese research, a sample consisting of 422 women aged in average 54.2 years, underwent a self-administered questionnaire on satisfaction and general well-being. The analysis of the results shows that the sample has high levels of satisfaction in life, 38.4% indicates a high satisfaction and 23% a good satisfaction. These two subgroups carried out a greater number of activities as volunteers in comparison with those less satisfied (Murayama 2013). Even concerning the studies on adults, the overall duration of volunteering seems to be a growth factor of the empowerment.

In the long term, volunteers have higher cognitive, behavioural and emotional changes in comparison with the short term volunteers. Measurements were conducted in two groups of volunteers of an Indian organisation, involving 20 long-term volunteers and 21 short-term volunteers. The cognitive changes (and especially the meta-cognitive ones) refer to the improvement in setting aside their own interests, to a greater awareness of both the influence of their own actions on future generations and to a reduction of the prejudices and a change in the perception of daily problems. Some volunteers indicated their work as capable of giving meaning to their lives.

The change experienced in behaviours relate to the reduction of aggressive tendencies, the improvement in the quality of the relations and a reduction in the conflicts in interpersonal exchanges, an increased personal safety in social contexts and a better awareness of rights and duties of citizens. At the emotional level, variations regarded the management of negative emotions, a greater tolerance in respect to frustration, satisfaction deriving from the volunteering experiences of work and a greater awareness of the positive emotions (Elias et al. 2016).

According to another study, those who took part in this type of activity developed important skills, for example leadership, critical thinking, the ability to interact with others and to tackle the problems. The volunteering period is related to the competences developed and also on the wellbeing individually perceived (Goodman and Tredway 2016). Finally, regarding the third age, the benefits are related to the preservation of cognitive abilities, which in this age are liable to decline. A review by Anderson et al. (2014), which analysed 73 studies on the benefits of volunteering in the third age, showed a model for which volunteering increases social, physical and cognitive activity to varying degrees depending on the requirements of the volunteer placement. They go on with the hypothesis that an increase in social, physical and cognitive activity can improve functioning through a host of biological and psychological mechanisms. This is because along with the cognitive activity involved in volunteering, there is also physical activity involved (volunteers on average are more physically active) and this has a direct link in literature on reduced symptoms of depression (Blake et al. 2009) and improved cognition and brain health (Erickson et al. 2013). In light of these findings, they ultimately suggest that those improvements in social, physical and cognitive functioning could actually reduce functional impairments and the risk of dementia.

CONCLUSION: THE SCHOLA PROCESS AND THE LIFELONG LEARNING APPROACH

If volunteering is based on values such as altruism (for others), freedom (free will), not for profit (something for nothing), for the community (general interest) in a collective way (together for a common purpose), it may also have an impact both on an individual level and collective level (Halba 2014).

On a psychological and cognitive level, the empowerment and resilience in the volunteering process may have a decisive impact for both youngsters and the elderly to give a meaning to their lives – the youngsters who feel lost and anxious to build a future and the elderly who have the feeling of being a social burden and all this in a perspective of empowerment of skills, emotional intelligence and problem solving in youngsters, while for the elderly in a perspective of cognitive empowerment and general life wellbeing.

On a human and social level, youngsters are asked to gain experience to acquire competences, the elderly have a great deal of experience they can no longer use as competence on the 'paid' labour market – volunteering is the place where in economic terms the 'offer' meets the 'demand'. The offer of unused resource (from the elderly) meets the demand for resources and competences (from the youngsters). Nonetheless, this is not a one-way process – seniors update their competences and acquire new experiences thanks to youngsters. This is in other terms a 'win-win' situation where there is no more competition but shared economics.

Therefore, taking into account both the cognitive and psychological level and human and social level, volunteering brings a very positive added value to bridge the generation gap.

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Belgium: Fostering Competences in Superdiverse Settings

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, Flemish cultural life has been well known for its vibrant voluntary scene (Hustinx et al. 2015). A broad spectrum of organisations working with volunteers was present in all aspects of cultural life. During their teenage years, a majority of the population is engaged in sports clubs, youth work or artistic activities. In urban settings, there is a strong pressure on these traditional organisations from upcoming superdiverse phenomena (Vertovec 2007). New urban cultural organisations are often less structured or are engaged in less traditional activities such as street-dance or ethnic cultural activities (Schuermans, Oosterlynck 2017). Many youngsters are engaged in these organisations, primarily as participants, but also as volunteers. Volunteers are often recruited among the participants of an organisation. Talented youngsters are often asked to start volunteering, which lowers the threshold for voluntary action.

Although Flemish culture has this tradition of voluntarism, the valorisation of voluntary activities in terms of formal, informal or non-formal educational goals is relatively new. Pioneering work has been done by our project partner JES in order to stimulate transfer towards the labour market of young people. After early school leaving it is hard to reach public that is often confronted with unemployment and with frequent job refusals. Therefore, multiple tools have been developed to valorise young people's talents. Much experience has been gathered also to formalize learning in these complex learning processes. Non-formal and formal learning in social-profit sector is acknowledged as being an important added value towards the labour market. Yet, the sector of formal education remains virtually untouched

by these recent developments. With the possible exception of part-time schooling, the link between schools and social-profit sector is virtually non-existing. The Schola project therefore fulfils a welcoming gap in existing educational practice.

The Schola project was carried out in cooperation with three local partnerships: (1) JES, (2) JESPO and (3) POLS. JES is an anagram for 'Jeugd en stad', which can be translated as 'youth and the city'. This organisation describes itself as an 'urban laboratory' that wants to engage in developing talents of urban youngsters. As JES is primarily active in superdiverse cities such as Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent, its target population is equally superdiverse. Youngsters have origins in all possible ethnicities and are often from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. JES has a youngster-centered approach in order to stimulate young people taking responsibilities. They are engaged in different fighting sports, street dance, cultural-youth work ...
JESPO is a local sport organisation in Antwerp that facilitates sports lessons in a diverse range of sports such as triathlon, gym, polo ... Youngsters between the ages of 6 and 18 years are engaged on a weekly basis in the activities. All activities are monitored by a 'chief-coach', who is assisted by a broad range of volunteers. These volunteers are sometimes adults, but may also be former participants. The POLS is a network of secondary schools in and around Antwerp that work together on a regularly basis with Karel de Grote University college. All kinds of activities are organized together in order to stimulate learning both at the level of the teacher education faculty (KDG) and at secondary schools.

METHOD

Over the course of the period between 2017 and 2018, a series of collaborative testing sessions was carried out in order to test the Schola approach. The first intellectual output of the Schola project was first tested, after which the mentoring was tested as well. The tool was first discussed with external experts with experience in voluntary action, in particular with youngsters in superdiverse areas (JES and JESPO). Subsequently, the approach of validating competences acquired through voluntary action was bridged to schools of secondary education. Therefore, the schools of the POLS network were asked to assess the Schola tool (IO1).
In the second phase, the mentoring to train educators to practice the

Schola approach was developed. Again, the external experts were first asked to assess a pilot version of the training program. Secondly, educators related to the POLS-network were asked to test the training in order to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education. More precisely, the teacher educators of the Flemish teacher educators network (VELOV) were trained and asked to provide feedback. Secondly, the coordinators of the LIEN-schools (middle school) undertook the same procedure. Finally, feedback was collected from the sample of professionals involved in student coaching and support at the level of secondary education.

In order to assess the implementation of the Schola project, three datasets were composed: (1) educators: coaches of volunteers (non-formal education) were interviewed. (2) Educators: teachers at school (formal education) were interviewed. (3) Students involved in voluntary action were interviewed. Both coaches of volunteers and students were personally interviewed. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured topic list in order to gain insight in their personal concerns and feelings on the implementation of the Schola approach. Teachers at schools were interviewed using a focus group discussion. Therefore, the same semi-structured topic list was used to guide the discussion. A written report of all interviews and focus group discussions was administered. In order to validate the data-collection, themes that were the result of data-analysis were triangulated. A thematic analysis was conducted on the data-collection.

THE SCHOLA PROCESS IN BELGIUM

In this section, we thematically summarize the most important themes that emerged while implementing the Schola approach in Belgium. A common impression of the participants is the urgency of the topic of bridging formal and informal learning in superdiverse conditions. In addition to this, several suggestions were made in order to improve and facilitate future implementation of the Schola approach.

THEME 1: A CONSENSUS OF PARTICIPANTS ON THE URGENCY OF THE TOPIC

A consensus was established between all participants on the importance of teachers acknowledging the competences of their students, both in formal education and in informal or non-formal settings outside schools. Teachers agreed on their need for information on this part and the educators-coaches of volunteers outside school setting stressed how much they felt privileged to be able to work on this base with their volunteers. It is exactly this attitude that is as valuable to students as well as coaches. Teachers mentioned their interest in what their students learn outside school. In particular for older students (age 16–18), the habit of chatting between students and teachers decreases and therefore the knowledge of what happens outside schools is deficient.

An educator engaged with youngsters in a triathlon club stressed the role that the students (aged 16–18) learn in his club. He usually works with youngsters who organise training activities for minors (aged 6–14). The educator stressed that students always need to learn the value of entrepreneurship. They often lack the necessary self-esteem ('efficacy beliefs') to successfully train these youngsters in order to become successful amateur sports men. This is why this educator works according to the following devise: "If you give them wings, they will be able to fly".

THEME 2: A COMMON CONCERN ON THE NEED FOR SUPPORT

With all participants, a concern was raised on the practical use of the tool. Language as used in the tool is said to sound rather formally. In the first place, students and coaches of voluntary action mention that they are not acquainted with the formal language used to assess the students' competences. The European framework of key competences may be a useful framework as a basis for the tool, yet some scaffolding is needed for participants who feel uncertain from a language point of view. Some participants suggested working with graphic signs or images to support users. In addition to that, the use of concrete examples or an extensive glossary would improve the application of the Schola approach.

Rather than being concerned with the formal language, teachers are more concerned with the translation of the framework to the standards they use at school. Depending on the subject, the teaching of these standards is very specific or rather unspecified. Some of them work with very specific learning targets, which are not always highly compatible with the framework. Others said to feel uncertain about the translation of the rather vague framework to even more vague official standards. Support may also be needed here to make the tool more practical to use.

One of the teachers engaged in the project was a language teacher. It took a while to convince him of the usefulness of the Schola approach in his particular setting. The youngster engaged with voluntary action was in this case engaged in a sports club (acrogym). It took the teacher a while to bring him to see the potential of this voluntary engagement. After some discussion, however, the language teacher gave the student differentiated assignment. When his classmates were about to make a standardised assignment on literature, the student was to write a self-assessment based on his voluntary experience.

THEME 3: A QUESTION ABOUT THE 'OWNERSHIP' OF THE TOOL

Several questions were asked about the person in charge of the use of the tool. Traditionally, teachers are in charge of the learning process. They may be seen as the 'drivers' of the educational process. Yet, with regards to the use of the tool of the Schola project, this centralized position of the teacher may be challenged. In order to valorise the competences that students develop outside school, other "drivers" may be distinguished as well. In the first place, there is the question to which extent educators-coaches of the voluntary action are seen as participants in the learning process or rather as "co-drivers". In order to value their experience, it may be interesting to position them towards a more or less central position. To the extent that teachers are prepared for such a decentralisation of the learning process, this latter idea may be fruitful for them as it may reduce teachers' work load.

In addition to this decentralisation of the ownership of the learning process, the students themselves also come into the picture. Many

educationalists advocate the importance of students' 'self-regulation skills' in the learning process (Zimmerman 1990). It therefore must be discussed to which extent students are prepared to play a pivotal role in this learning process. Building on this question about the ownership of the tool, it was chosen primarily to address educational professionals in schools (not teachers, but rather coaches that focus on student wellbeing). They were addressed as matchmakers in order to prompt students to engage with the Schola approach.

THEME 4: A SUGGESTION FOR THE BROADER USE OF THE TOOL

Several teachers raised a concern on the limited focus of the Schola project on reducing early school leaving. The contextualisation of the tool as useful to stimulate success at school, regardless of students' backgrounds found much more support. For certain, none of the participants questioned the importance of the battle against early school leaving. Yet, the battle to stimulate success at school is broader, and thus the potential of the use of the Schola tool may be equally broader.

One of the teachers at school was engaged in the project; however, she raised questions on the broader usefulness of the approach. The use of competences acquired during volunteering activities was in her opinion too limited. She questioned whether also other activities in addition to voluntary action could be seen as relevant sources of competence development. Hence, they could also be validated through the Schola intellectual outputs. An example was given of a young girl who was very engaged with the caretaking of her younger brothers and sisters at home. Technically, these activities could not be seen as voluntary activities. However, many participants agreed how important it could be to recognise the added value of these experiences for the girl in question. By validating these experiences and by bridging the gap to formal learning, important steps could be taken to foster success at school for many youngsters who are threatened by early school leaving.

Two potential additional possibilities of use were mentioned. First, a use for students who are not at risk of academic failure. Some participants suggested that the students engaged in voluntary action are not often the ones that face academic failure at school. It may therefore be useful to widen the targeted public of the tool. Second, many students demonstrate intensely different behaviour inside and outside of school. That goes for voluntary engagement, but also for youth work, sports clubs ... Potentially, this engagements as participants in social life may also be recognized and valorised by teachers and educators (non-volunteers, non-students at risk).

A common concern mentioned by the users of the Schola approach in Belgium was the risk of the Matthew Effect (Perc 2014) . This effect implies that the benefit of measure would not reach the target public but rather a privileged selection that would not need the measures. Translated to the Schola approach, educational professionals in Belgium feared that students at risk of academic failure (Early School Leaving) often do not perfectly match the criteria for voluntary action. This is why the potential beneficiaries of the approach would then not reach its targeted public. It may therefore be rewarding to apply the Schola approach for wider groups of students at risk in order to foster their academic (and personal) success.

THEME 5: A CHALLENGE OF USING THE TOOL IN A CIRCULAR PATTERN

The use of the Schola tool (IO1) has primarily been tested in a direct way of enhancing the relationship between teachers and educators-coaches in a one-way direction. Yet ultimately, the idea of the tool is to stimulate a circular relationship in which educators on both sides of the process use the tool to communicate. This goal has not been reached.

CONCLUSION

The Schola approach presents an important challenge to teaching and learning in Belgium. Current curriculum is strongly focused on formal learning. Yet, the Schola approach challenges educators to bridge the formal and non-formal learning. By validating competences that were acquired outside of school, educators intend to find new and innovative ways to revalorize the potential of students and therefore to foster success at schools of those youngsters who are at risk of academic failure. By adopting such an approach, schools may prevent early school leaving.

Still, important challenges still remain to foster the implementation of the Schola approach and to disseminate its use further in the country. A vital question is for instance, how we can motivate teachers to engage in this approach. It was noticed that teachers' motivation to engage in this approach is a necessary success factor that fosters or hampers the implementation of the approach. Moreover, it was seen as a crucial success factor for the approach to be aligned with the existing curriculum. The Schola tool (IO1) is conceptually based on the European Framework of Key Competences. However, many educators found it difficult to recognise the practical competences that their youngsters acquired through voluntary action and to translate them to the terminology used in the European framework. Therefore, we believe the continued teachers' professional development is needed in order to further disseminate the approach developed. Thoughtful scaffolding is needed in order to facilitate the use of the key-competences framework in national curricula.

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France: From a Fruitful Local Partnership to a National Recognition

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INTRODUCTION

The Schola approach was tested in France respecting the requirements set in the beginning of the testing – combining the training for the educators and the support to youngsters aged 14 to 16 years involved in voluntary activities. The educators involved were teachers together with the head of the school and an assistant educator (considered as educational and administrative staff) from the Collège Blaise Pascal (Massy, Essonne) and professionals working with youngsters in the framework of extracurricular activities offered by the Opera de Massy kindly hosted the promotions in 2017 and 2018 in order to make a link with professionals working for them.

FIRST STEP: AN EFFICIENT PARTNERSHIP
BUILT TO INVOLVE MOTIVATED YOUNGSTERS

The Schola project was the second project implemented in Massy (Essonne) by iriv Conseil in partnership with the College Blaise Pascal. A previous European project Comenius – the Success at school through Volunteering (SAS)[1] designed pedagogical sessions to be offered to

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[1] SAS – Success at school through volunteering (2012–2014) was a European project Comenius and was implemented in 6 European countries (UK leader, France, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal and Slovenia). The project offered youngsters living in disadvantaged areas a pedagogical approach, based on volunteering considered as an example of non-formal and informal learning, to enhance a voluntary involvement in order to increase success at school. Pedagogical sessions were offered to youngsters around topics allowing them to value learning, to build a path with school between the knowledge acquired through volunteering and the knowledge required at school. The report of the project is available in electronic version (Devecchi 2015).

youngsters facing difficulties at school to re-engage them at school thanks to volunteering considered as an extracurricular activity where they could bring a positive contribution and therefore change the negative image they may have on their abilities and competences. This first project was tested in a short period of time – 4 sessions in 2014 thanks to the first partnership with the City Hall of Massy that associated with a teacher of the College Blaise Pascal.

This first year was followed by two other years (2015 and 2016) where iriv offered on a voluntary basis a monthly action to young volunteers of the College Blaise Pascal, in 2016 with the partnership of the Cultural Center Paul B. The same agenda was followed: a first information session was offered in October or November in order for the youngsters to register. Then, monthly sessions were offered, on Wednesday afternoons, from January to May. The final session was dedicated to a reward session where a certificate of Volunteering was dispatched among the youngsters who have actively participated. The main criteria to be awarded were: having attended at least 3 sessions plus the information session. An average of 15 to 20 youngsters were involved each year; most of them attended more than 5 sessions. The level of education was the same: students aged 14 to 16 years, corresponding to the last year of the first cycle of secondary school in France ('collège').

This was not by chance as the last year before high school ('lycée') is dedicated to an internship of 5 days, which is compulsory and considered as a first contact with professional life. For the first time, students could meet adults who are neither their parents, nor their parents' friends nor their teachers. The process to look for a voluntary mission or to find an internship is exactly the same: searching in the neighbourhood for relevant key actors, contacting them either face to face or through e-mails or phone calls, asking them for a mission to be fulfilled in a dedicated length of time – 5 days (9 a.m. 5 p.m. for the internship). Since 2014, the action 'Volunteering at school' ('Bénévolat à l'école') has been suggested by the Collège Blaise Pascal to students aged 14–16 years old as an example of extra-curricular activity. It was successful in 2015 and 2016 because of a simple strategy: every September, an informative meeting was held at school and then an involvement once a month (one afternoon) from October to June was demanded from students.

Therefore, the first year of the Schola project (implemented from September 2016 to May 2017) corresponded to the fourth promotion of the action initiated in 2014 between the College Blaise Pascal and iriv Conseil. However, this time, the sessions were more numerous and intensive. Ten sessions were suggested together with the involvement of youngsters on the ground thanks to an event organised by the Collège Blaise Pascal with a kindergarten, the retirement home Ibiscus and the cultural centre Paul B. A close relationship was built on the ground together with the Opera de Massy. It consisted of two main supports: the Opera House kindly offered a meeting room (a pedagogical area for the facility). In the beginning of each session a professional with different professional background explained his/her professional path to the students - an artist (a comedian), a technician (in electricity), a manager (for the fund raising of the Opera House) ... The second year, the same sample was followed but this time, the involvement in the action on the ground for the youngsters started earlier (in January) and was concentrated on a topic chosen together with youngsters, the meeting of relevant professionals and the involvement of artists.

Lea, a former participant (2016–2017) who was involved in the preparation to become a volunteer, was concretely involved in the second year of the project. She testifies as follows: "This project allowed me to better speak in public. After this first year of the Schola, I was willing to do concrete things for others. I have become a volunteer supervisor for the new promotion of students (2017–2018)". Her participation is really appreciated by both the educators and the students.

Moumine, a participant during the second year (2017–2018), provided the following testimony: "I became involved in the action Volunteering at the College to gain competences outside the school and also to give pleasure to people I did not know." Moumine is also involved in other extracurricular activities.

SECOND STEP: OFFERING AN APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT

The profiles of the educators were complementary. The first profile corresponded to teachers or an education assistant at the Collège Blaise Pascal as well as the head of the secondary school who was in charge of involving/motivating/engaging his colleagues. There were a total of 6 people but only 5 of them attended the training sessions designed by iriv Conseil. The second profile corresponded to professionals working for the Opera de Massy in the framework of extracurricular activities offered in Massy and in other cities in Essonne (Ile de France): two people in charge of educative actions, a music teacher in charge of the classroom for young students (primary school), a comedian, a dancer, two electricians, three managers in charge of the programming and the fund raising. They explained the youngsters their educative and professional path and the reasons why they were selected for their employment and the qualification genuinely required. Most of the time, their original diploma or qualification was not directly linked to their present professional position. For instance, the person in charge of the educative actions at the Opera de Massy graduated from a school of art (in sculpture) and was qualified in flower craftwork.

The pedagogical support designed by iriv Conseil consisted of three sessions. The first session was dedicated to the public policy implemented to struggle against ESL (at European and national levels), some explanation on formal learning (Bologna process), non-formal and informal learning (Copenhagen process), how far volunteering could be considered as an example of non-formal and informal learning with an explanation of the portfolio process. In complement, main references were dispatched: the CEDEFOP guidelines (Cedefop 2015), the European reports on ESL (Commission 2013) and the Communication on EU Policies and Volunteering (Commission 2011). The second session was focused on the competence approach (European and national levels), a comparative approach making a link between the competences required for a pupil/student and for a volunteer and the explanation of the portfolio process (from experience to competence and to an action plan). In complement, main references were dispatched such as the European framework "8 key competences" (Commission 2006), the French report on Early school leaving (Thelot 2004) and the portfolio designed for the VAEB project (VAEB 2003–2006). The third and last pedagogical session suggested a brainstorming following the SWOT analysis process – insisting on the weak points (i.e. difficulties in involving professionals from associations and from the City hall of Massy) and the strong points (the involvement of the youngsters all year long).

The pedagogical sessions offered to educators combined theoretical and practical information – all the theoretical issues tackled were illustrated by examples of professional practices. It was important to identify the main barriers faced by educators and the ways to overcome them. It was also important to be as precise as possible on the information provided – the competence approach may have been explained in general terms but not applied in a practical way. This point was particularly relevant as teachers in the last year of the first cycle of secondary school are asked to fill a grid of competences for their pupils/students without being sure of the competences they could really assess. The last session was dedicated to general brainstorming in order to identify weak points. For instance, it is not so easy for educators to be able to provide a relevant assessment of the experience gained outside of school thanks to a voluntary experience and therefore to assess this experience in terms of competence. Educators have to be better equipped to be able to identify the potential barriers faced by youngsters when they are willing to become involved in volunteering: sometimes they cannot find a relevant association; other times associations are reluctant to accept youngsters because they are not qualified enough. The planning of the sessions offered the youngsters a reward for their involvement during their last session in June and the yearly event of the school dedicated to all volunteers.

THIRD STEP: THE REFLEXIVE APPROACH FOR THE GENERAL PROCESS OF THE PROJECT

The French team applied the SWOT analysis approach to this two-year testing in Massy with the following findings.

The 'strength' was the portfolio designed for the project as this is a simple and comprehensive tool which combines very theoretical references including the glossary provided by the CEDEFOP and other relevant references from European institutions in the lifelong learning field together with a very concrete process (4 step approach). This holistic portfolio could also be enriched by other existing tools and methods already used in the field of volunteering in the 5 partners' countries.

Two kinds of 'weaknesses' were identified. The first one was the understanding of the educators that before being involved in voluntary activities, youngsters had to be prepared, therefore the first sessions were more theoretical. The second weakness was to explain to educators the concrete benefits of volunteering in the acquisition of competences that will be relevant/used at school.

A first "opportunity" was clearly to have been able to involve so many students all the yearlong during 2 years. The second "opportunity" was to have been able to combine a variety of professional profiles in school (educators at school, teachers and assistant educator) and outside school (professionals involved in educative action on the ground at the Opera de Massy). Moreover, they were willing to be trained to the competence approach and accepted to dedicate time in complement to their teaching to extracurricular activities with their students.

The 'threat' is directly linked to the recognition of learning gained outside school on the basis of volunteering. The assessment suggested by the Schola portfolio should be officially recognised in the French educational system (Rectorate on a regional level, Ministry for National Education on a national level). There might be a way thanks to the academic educative policy (Versailles 2020) which is also directly linked to the educative plan of the College Blaise Pascal.

In the following parts of the article, the headmaster of the College Blaise Pascal, a teacher of Physics associated with the action since the beginning and an assistant educator testified on the impact of the Schola process in their professional practice and in their relationship with the students they are working with.

Marjorie Piquette, in charge of the educative actions for the Opera de Massy and involved in many actions on the ground among the students of various ages, testified as follows: "The action Volunteering at the College has been a main source of inspiration as I have not thought that students could be trained to support other students. This peer to peer approach is certainly the best way to be convincing among youngsters who may be reluctant towards a more formal environment".

Benjamin Arino is the headmaster of the college Blaise Pascal located in Massy (Essonne, France) in the Sensitive Urban Area, Massy-Opera. It has been granted the ranking of the Priority Education Network because of the typology of its intake – mostly economic and social difficulties of the families of this territory. Why involve a college (secondary school in France) in an Erasmus+ research-action project? Taking into account the existing pedagogical actions carried out by the teachers, the evolution of the school project integrating all educational pathways and the context of the reform of compulsory schooling, it seemed coherent to attempt this European adventure.

This project involved active participation of teachers and of the head of the school, outside their time of service, in several directions: contributing to the experimentation of tools, such as portfolio (IO1) and guide for mentoring (IO2); participating in international meetings in France, Belgium and Slovenia and in the two seminars in Italy and Poland; testing the tools with the students as part of learning activities outside the school day; last but not least, managing the demanding project administratively and financially, a responsibility of the head of the school.

The forms of student engagement proposed as part of the Blaise Pascal College project can be carried out outside the school (with partners) as well as within the school – by participating for example in democratic bodies or in the context of projects related to solidarity, economy and to sustainable development.

Educational projects or forms of engagement based on volunteering enrich the educational pathways (citizen path, future path, artistic and cultural education path), ultimately the student's academic pathway. The persistent difficulty lies in identifying and incorporating the skills mobilized in this type of action and commitment. The essential added value of the Schola project lies at this level: to enable the professionals in charge of pupils to identify, value (even evaluate) and reinvest the competences related to informal and non-formal learning in a pupil's curriculum. A pupil's awareness of his/her skills acquired outside the classroom is a way of reassuring, securing and improving self-esteem (with a non-negligible impact on a young person's health, as defined by WHO – his/her well-being in particular), thus it is a factor of academic success.

In many respects, Schola approach is also involved in other forms of student engagement: at school, any form of involvement and

participation in the life of the college (Council of College Life, class delegate, representative students on the board of directors, mediator …) or voluntary activities outside the school (i.e. participation in outreach social actions organized by the educators of the educational success of the city of Massy).

Moreover, the heart of the project lies in the development of the teachers' and educators' professional skills, with a prospect to evaluating learning. In this sense, the tools developed can be used to assess key competencies in the frame of French Common Core of Skills, Knowledge and Culture (French implementation of the European framework of 8 key competences – 8KC). The various forms of students' engagement also make it possible to achieve a higher level of the mastery of different key competences, such as the French language (KC1), especially in spoken form, to develop methods and tools for learning (KC5), to contribute to representations of the world and human activities (KC8) … A multitude of pedagogical projects based on student engagement requiring the mobilization of skills related to non-formal and informal learning can enrich both educational pathways and the learning framework.

Finally, the originality of this project resides in attributing to the Collège Blaise Pascal the role of a leader, which grants a multitude of tasks, more or less complex, to the head of the school. Although the coordination of the European teams was facilitated by the role of iriv Conseil, a partnership of the college, as well as the administrative and financial management of the project was very complex and demanding, in particular because of regulations for the involvement of the staff of the college. This aspect may have been the most original in my professional experience, but allowed me to put the college (secondary school) and European researchers at the heart of a research-action project, while constantly aiming to improve students' academic success.

Fernando Rosa, assistant educator at the Collège Blaise Pascal, explained his personal and professional background: "Before arriving in France, I have been living in London (England) for more than a decade, where I have done some voluntary work involving teenagers, such as: organizing and supervising a team of twenty volunteers, helping a little village to rebuild a children's park in the half size of a football pitch. Likewise, I have also coached a football team (of teenagers) and other little projects throughout England. Here in France, I am part of a voluntary coaching team for children (5 to 15 years old). Education has always been part of my educative path and life, together with the

will (emphasis) to learn and share with others the knowledge received every day." He is deeply convinced by voluntary involvement: "I truly believe that there is so much learning and experiences to be gained outside school that they can be evaluated and valued in a résumé to give more chances to young people to succeed in their future life. Teenagers experience so much in their lives in different domains – family, society, sport/leisure … but many of these competences go unseen and unrecognized throughout their adult lives albeit they could use them to find the right job for their future. Once at the College Blaise Pascal, I was informed of the Schola project. Volunteering can actually be found everywhere, in all aspects of life, and as professionals, teachers, educators … we could really make a difference. We can work together to help young people facing difficulties at school to prepare them for their future social and professional lives". He has gained a lot from his participation in the Schola project: "It is not only made to help youngsters for their future lives, but also to introduce and deliver many competences and values for us (professionals, teachers, educators …). It was also important to have the opportunity to share and exchange experiences with colleagues from other countries. Thanks to this project, I have learnt new definitions and values in and outside the educational system at national and European levels that have enriched my understanding of my professional, social and even family life. In all European countries, volunteering is seen and tackled differently with one main target: "Help others freely", and it is amazing! Even more when it is made to help young people in difficulties".

Rachel Savoie is a teacher of Physics involved in three extracurricular activities involving one monthly workshop for students who are willing to be involved in a voluntary action. She explains the actions which started in 2014 at the College Blaise Pascal: "For the past 4 years, we have been trying to mobilize the 4th grade college students who meet once a month to discover what a volunteer experience can bring them. They could meet with members of associations to share their volunteer experiences. They conducted a project within the college, where each student was assigned a mission to be accomplished. Each year, 10 to 20 students of the 4th year have been involved since 2014 – more girls than boys with very different profiles combining different profiles of students – less motivated by studies, dropouts, very good students, involved in many projects inside and outside the college. My participation in the Schola project has been a stimulus in my day-to-day teaching practice and in the extracurricular activities carried out for the college. Since the beginning of my career, I have been aware of the schools' dropout students and ever since, I have worked only in special

educative areas allowing me to be more committed towards students, inside and outside the classrooms. The Schola project has been a way to change my perspective on school dropouts. I have been working for 18 years at the college Blaise Pascal, considered as a school with a difficult public, meaning many conflicts/clashes during my physics classes. In the beginning, I would be carried away by these conflicts, therefore punishing the students straight away or sometimes I would find myself in a deadlock with these complicated students. By gaining experience through the years and even more with the Schola project, I have learned that these students could display a totally different behavior in another context (in workshops for example), without the public "class". It is not always easy for me to keep control of the situation, especially with students who have a very difficult behavior with impulsive and offensive language. I have learned that it is better to try to calm down the situation and discuss it with them. The Schola project also allowed me to change the way people look at these students with a particular profile, especially the parents or inhabitants of the city as the college has a bad reputation/image because of its location. Many young people – who are not necessarily former students of the college – show a rather negative picture of themselves. As a result, many inhabitants in the neighborhood think that they are students at the college and immediately mingle with problematic youngsters, which give a bad image of the school. Our role as teachers is to show to our partners that even our most difficult students may be involved in a project and have a very constructive attitude.

This is particularly the case with diverse partnerships, such as the Opera House, the cultural center Paul B and the media center of Massy to involve any profile of students. This is very rewarding for students facing difficulties at school or even dropout pupils. Another very positive and rewarding experience for our students was the link created with the seniors' residence Les Hibiscus, next to the college where the elderly were invited by our students to a show organized last June with students involved in the Schola project. On this occasion, the elderly have changed the image they had of our students – it became much more positive. As a result, our students within the neighborhood could find much easier internship placements for their 4th year program as many of them were refused previously by companies as the managers believed they lacked liability.

The preparation offered to students by the Schola was first dedicated to a preparation for their weekly internship (in December of January). The work done with them helps them to learn how to introduce themselves, how to ask the appropriate questions within the company and how to behave in a courteous and motivated way during the internship. This has been of great support for the teacher in charge of these students who must take care of all the internships (28 students) during a week.

Finally, a very positive point related to the work done together with the students within the Schola project was their involvement afterwards. Some of the students involved in the Schola proposed themselves to become supervisors of the following students. Others carried out other volunteer work, for instance in cultural events or festivals.

The Schola project also allowed me to enhance an efficient teamwork with colleagues among the College Blaise Pascal. It is not enough to write reports on situations of Early School Leaving but to try to understand why some students have dropped out. Thanks to the information shared among professionals, we could collectively find solutions to reengage them. Another very important point: Schola allowed me to enrich my workshops and to better involve my dropout students. Working in small groups brings them more attention from the adults, a closer relationship, as we can address more personal topics such as family, extracurricular activities … These students can regain self-confidence through these workshops. Finally, the project was the occasion to develop a very innovative aspect in my practice: the assessment of skills within my topic (physics), but also within the framework of my several projects and workshops. My greatest satisfaction was to see the self-confidence gained among students through the Schola project, willing to help others, to stimulate their curiosity about things that were unfamiliar to them because is not part of their culture.

CONCLUSION

The Schola project is an example of applied research in the field of practice-oriented education, addressing educators in school and outside school. The French contribution, written in close partnership between the College Blaise Pascal and iriv Conseil was meant to express how innovative the Schola project is both in its theoretical part and in its very applied part with the feedback received from educators who are working with leaners – students aged 14–16 years in a secondary school located in a sensitive urban area. We intended to show to which degree a voluntary experience might be a relevant extracurricular activity to support students to prevent them from dropping out. The Schola outputs should be most relevant in France as the focus has been more and more made on activities to be implemented outside school to enrich the skills of the students that might be relevant inside school. The involvement in a European team has been the main added value to be convincing both on local and national levels.
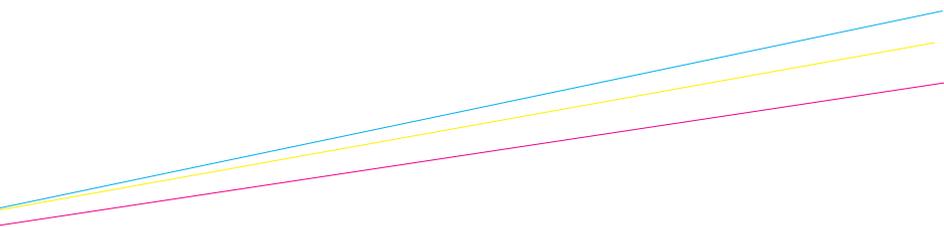
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Italy: Volunteering as an Empowerment for Life

Federico Batini, Marco Bartolucci, Alberto Santoro

INTRODUCTION

The Lab of Experimental Pedagogy has been working for years in the field of preventing school dispersion. The group works, for this reason, in many different levels, in an empirical experimental way. During the last ten years, the research has been focused on how we can tackle Early School Leaving (ESL) (Batini, et al. 2017, Bartoluccia and Batini 2016) – by implementing an active teaching of competences – how this kind of teaching could affect learning outcomes in students, but also in a psychological and cognitive dimension (Batini, Bartolucci and De Carlo 2017, 2018) and how reading out loud can empower people (Batini, Toti, Bartolucci 2015) from kindergarten through all stages of life and even in the elderly experiencing pathological cognitive conditions (Batini, Bartolucci 2016).

In Italy, the average rate of Early School Leaving is approximately 17.6%, well above the Europe 2020 target of 10%. 15% of 18–24 year olds have no other qualifications than the middle school level. Rates are unbalanced from the north, were some regions like Veneto are below the target already (8%), to the south, where some regions like Sicily and Sardinia are at 24%. About 5.5 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 have not finished upper secondary education and are not included in education or training. On average, the unemployment rate of these subjects who dropped out is 40.1%, compared to global youth unemployment in Europe which stands at 23.2%. Addressing early school leaving is a stepping-stone towards improving young people's opportunities and supporting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In the framework of the Schola project, we organized the activities connected to the 'alternate education and training' (compulsory internship) experience of students of upper secondary schools, acquired through volunteering. One of the objectives of the Schola project is modelling a tool, namely a portfolio, for educators – teachers at school and professionals (in associations or local authorities) outside school – in order to support them to assess the skills and competences acquired by youngsters thanks to a volunteering. Competences can thus be enhanced at school with to the aspect of the prevention of school dispersion. By starting with this goal, a particular type of alternate education and training, not focused on specific professional skills but on the development of both transverse competences and skills and the ability to relate to others, has been tested.

THE FIRST YEAR: THE EXPERIENCE IN PERUGIA: A DIFFERENT MODEL OF 'ALTERNATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING'

In close cooperation with the Liceo Pieralli of Perugia and the LaAV Association (Reading Aloud), we implemented a model in which hours of the alternate education and training, provided for the students of upper secondary schools, were carried out through volunteering activities.

Prior to the volunteering experience, eight training meetings had been held with the aim to prepare the students for the activities that they were later participating in. During the first meeting, 18 students and 6 teachers of the Liceo Pieralli were explained the Schola project, its goals and purposes, as well as the role and the activities of the LaAV association. A second part of the meeting was focused mainly on the volunteering activities in which they were later involved.

Starting from an initial reflection on the importance of volunteering as a social and personal resource, the chair of Experimental Pedagogy, together with the LaAV volunteers, prepared the training pathway for the students. It was focused on the techniques of reading aloud in public (involving phonemic apparatus, diction, expressive reading etc.), on the approach to volunteering at paediatric departments of hospitals and on the effects and cognitive and emotional benefits of listening to reading aloud.

After this preparatory stage, students began their alternate training and education experience, along with the LaAV volunteers, dealing with the

reading aloud for children, elderly people and peers . The preparation was considered adequate by the participants themselves: only moments of reading aloud to their peers were deemed to be difficult because of the embarrassment by feeling judged by them. Eventually, they overcame difficulties and asked to organize a reading aloud 'flash mob' at their school, which was really successful.

At the end of the experience, an open debate allowed to get feedback from students and stakeholders in general: teachers, LaAV volunteers, educators and professionals. Opinions and views expressed were gathered both during the training sessions aimed at the teachers and at the national seminar on the Schola project as well as through an online questionnaire. The contributions enriched the tool that were finalized at the European level within the Schola project. The main general conviction was that a volunteering experience can enable a student to acquire citizenship and transverse competences that may be valuable in the school curriculum, even more when carried out in the framework of the alternate training and education. A positive remark was shared about a tool allowing educators/teachers to gather information needed to assess not only the volunteering experience of the students, but also the acquired competences. Feedbacks from students were fully positive, with no exceptions.

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIENCE ON RELATIONAL DIMENSION, ON COPING AND ON THE SELF-EFFICACY PERCEPTION OF THE STUDENTS

In addition to the abovementioned activities, the Lab of Experimental Pedagogy of the University of Perugia put in place an experimental plan in order to evaluate, in an empirical and objective way, the possible self-development effects that may come from volunteering. The hypothesis is that through this kind of experience, students may not only acquire new skills and competences but also develop some personal dimensions which are essential in life as well as at school, such as resilience, coping, motivation, self-efficacy.

With the aim to verify this assumption, 18 students of the Liceo Pieralli, who chose to carry out their alternate training and education experience through volunteering, were administered tests before and after the volunteering experience. Tests used in order to measure the above mentioned dimensions were: **RPQ** (Laudadio et al. 2011) for

the resilience measurement; **Brief COPE** (Carver 1997) for coping; **AMOS** (De Beni et al. 2003) for assessing the capacity to study, the cognitive styles, the emotional and motivational factors of the learning; **assessment Scale for needs, values and self-efficacy,** in order to analyse the perception of perceived efficacy by the participants in relation to the work activity (even in the future), the job search and the management of complex problems. The testing also included a control group composed of students from other classes of the same upper secondary school who carried out the 'traditional' alternate training and education experience. Results of the experimental group show a statistically significant increase of the scores in the following dimensions:

- *relational fluidity:* the capacity to interact with others and to ask for help, to keep good relations and manage interpersonal conflicts.

- *expression:* being able to show feelings.

- *instrumental support use:* tendency to rely on the advice and the help of others in difficult situations.

Moreover, figures show a positive (although not statistically significant) trend in relation to:

- *reintegration with loss:* when people lack motivation and hope for the future, following a trauma, and do not use potentialities and capacities which are needed to overcome the trauma itself.

- *dysfunctional reintegration:* when the subject tackles the discomfort in an inadequate way, as for example by using drugs or alcohol or engaging in a destructive behaviour not to tackle adversities.

- *emotional maturity:* capacity to manage stressful situations; to tackle hindrances; to have self-control in difficult situations and events.

- *tolerance to frustration:* capacity to tolerate and manage difficulties or failures which are typical in the job search.

- *relational integration:* capacity to interact with new unknown persons, by respecting their competences, as well as to ask for advice from more experienced persons.

- *relational availability:* capacity to manage the relations network within the workplace, especially in the cooperation with colleagues and supervisor as well as with customers; it also refers to being able to work with people who have a different character.

- *commitment:* capacity to organize and perform the tasks needed for working effectively, achieving the objectives in time and learning new methods.

- *theories of intelligence, confidence in intelligence and confidence in personality.*

In short, the students who carried out their alternate training and education experience through the above-mentioned volunteering activity have, generally, developed their own relational and coping capacities and improved their own self-efficacy perception in relation to various aspects (emotional, relational, metacognitive, organisational ones …).

THE SECOND YEAR

In the second year, a series of meetings were held as a mentoring for educators (teachers in schools and professionals outside schools). The aim was to support them to implement the tool created within the Schola project as an output of the activities and research carried out during the first year. As for dissemination, two articles were produced and sent to one national journal and another international one (Batini and Bartolucci 2018, Batini, Bartolucci and Santoro 2018) The mentoring addressed to the professionals was structured according to a mix of both theoretical and practical contents, starting with an introduction on school dispersion and early school leaving. Educators and teachers involved were also explained the official strategies to prevent and counter these phenomenon and their specific potential role, with an in-depth analysis of the different types of learning (formal, not formal and informal). The activities were linked to the alternate training and education experience of students from three upper secondary schools, namely the Liceo Scientifico "Galileo Galilei" of Perugia the Liceo Scientifico of Città della Pieve and the Liceo Pieralli of Perugia. As compared to the previous year, a greater number of volunteering associations were involved. Between January and April 2018, five meeting were organised, addressed to both volunteers of the associations and the teachers of the upper secondary schools. The meetings were also aimed at the debate on the Intellectual Output 2 of the project as well as at the gathering of feedback from the participants, whereas the students involved have undergone a training on volunteering before the activities of the alternate training and education.

A testing of the psychological and cognitive dimensions of the students as well as a testing of the self-efficacy dimensions of the educators and a transverse testing were planned. A seminar on the data collected and analysed was held in May 2018.

A total of twenty-two volunteering associations joined the activities of the second year of the Schola project, belonging to a very wide range of sectors: Health, Social Advancement, Environment, Youth, Childhood, Civil Rights, LGBT, Migrations, Protection of Elderly People and so forth.

The following scheme presents names, sectors and specific activities of the different participating associations:

ARCAT UMBRIA – CLUB FAMIGLIA [Perugia]

FIELD: Socio-health care

ACTIVITIES: Interventions relating to Families at risk and micro-community. Promotion of health and wellbeing of families and communities in disadvantaged situations. Training on socio-emotional education and peer-education. Help desk on addictions.

PANTA REI [Passignano sul Trasimeno - PG]

FIELD: Environment

ACTIVITIES: Experience centre for the Environment Education. School camps, visits, training on sustainable development, environment education, food.

CESVOL – CENTRO SERVIZI PER IL VOLONTARIATO [Perugia]

ACTIVITIES: CESVOL Perugia is an Association gathering several volunteering association operating in a wide range of fields. It offers administrative support and specialist competences for the associations that are members of the network in different volunteering activities.

LaAV – Letture ad Alta Voce   [Perugia]

FIELD: Volunteering and Reading Aloud

ACTIVITIES: Reading Aloud sessions in hospitals, nursing home, centres for elderly people or adolescents and people with disabilities. Activities are held also in any other place where people with socio-economic or cultural disadvantages live as well as in schools, libraries and public spaces.

ORTOSOLE [Perugia]

FIELD: Environment

ACTIVITIES: "Orto Sole" deals with public green spaces, promoting the respect for the environment and developing projects for social support. The main activities are carried out together with elderly people, children or individuals living in disadvantaged conditions, thus enhancing social inclusion.

MpV – MOVIMENTO per la VITA [Perugia]

FIELD: Protection of the right to live; helpdesk for women in difficult pregnancies

ACTIVITIES: The MpV promotes the right to life and offers its help to women in difficult or unwanted pregnancies. The main activities are carried out with youngsters; fundraising and sensitisation campaigns are developed for the protection of life also as a social value.

ADiC Umbria – Associazione per i Diritti dei Cittadini [Perugia]

FIELD: Civil Rights

ACTIVITIES: The aim of the ADiC is to contribute to the improvement of the daily life of citizens considered as consumers, by ensuring protection of the equal opportunities, the civil rights and the environment. The Help desk offers information and assistance through operators and lawyers.

AUCC – ASSOCIAZIONE UMBRA per la LOTTA CONTRO il CANCRO [Perugia]

FIELD: Health care – Oncology

ACTIVITIES: AUCC onlus provides free socio-health care services to people with cancer and their families. The AUCC promotes scientific research, organises projects, volunteering, sensitization and prevention events addressed to public authorities and citizens.

A.L.I.CE. [Città della Pieve – PG]

FIELD: Health education (Stroke)

ACTIVITIES: Association composed of people affected by stroke and their families, doctors, neurologists, experts, physiatrists, health-care staff members and volunteers. Activities are focused on the functional recovery of the sick person as well as on the protection of his/her rights.

ATESU (ASS. TUTELA dell'ECOSISTEMA e della SALUTE UMANA) [Gubbio – PG]

FIELD: Protection of Ecosystems and Health

ACTIVITIES: ATESU Association deals with the dissemination of information and the promotion of new technologies not damaging the ecosystems. Fields of interest: agriculture, animal husbandry, nutrition, health, waste, prevention of pollution and contaminations in schools, work environment.

OMPHALOS [Perugia]

FIELD: LGBT, Civil Rights

ACTIVITIES: OMPHALOS provides LGBT persons support and protection by offering free services, such as HelpDesk, counselling, free HIV tests, legal support, an anti-violence centre for lesbians, a documentation centre. It promotes cultural and sport activities and sensitisation actions.

C.R.I. – CROCE ROSSA ITALIANA [Perugia]

FIELD: Emergency Treatment

ACTIVITIES: Ambulance Service; training; assistance to elderly people and people with disabilities; prevention of diseases. C.R.I. develops several projects for youngsters on different topics (culture and integration, prevention of addictions, humanitarian international law, digital technologies etc.).

AGESC – ASSOCIAZIONE GENITORI SCUOLE CATTOLICHE [Perugia]

FIELD: Social Life

ACTIVITIES: The AGESC promotes actions aimed at enhancing the relations between families and schools, catholic religion and civil society. It participates in various projects in local catholic schools for both curricular and extracurricular activities (laboratory, sport activities, leisure etc.).

ARONC – AMICI della RADIOTERAPIA ONCOLOGICA [Perugia]

FIELD: Health care – Radiotherapy

ACTIVITIES: The ARONC fosters scientific research in oncological radiotherapy. It aims to fund the training of young doctors, physicists, nurses, technicians in the field. Volunteering activities are mainly related to the health care assistance of patients and a Help Desk open to the general public.

ADA – ASSOCIAZIONE DIRITTI ANZIANI [Perugia]

FIELD: Protection of the Rights of Elderly People

ACTIVITIES: ADA deals with daily issues that elderly people may have, such as healthcare, family problems, houses, relationships with relatives etc. The focus is on the intergenerational relations, activities in nursing home, motor activities, cultural events involving elderly people, counselling.

COMITATO per la VITA "DANIELE CHIANELLI" [Perugia]

FIELD: Healthcare – Oncology

ACTIVITIES: Fundraising for leukaemia and cancer research and medical care of adults and children. The Association promotes social and psychological assistance to sick people and their families through volunteering activities. It also contributes to the procurement of equipment.

UNC – UNIONE NAZIONALE CONSUMATORI [Perugia]

FIELD: Consumer Rights

ACTIVITIES: The field of activities of the UNC is the protection of consumers, which is pursued through proposals of new laws and legal assistance, as well as through information actions, education and guidance to citizens. UNC has an information Help Desk and organizes training events.

A.L.I. – ASSOCIAZIONE LEGALI ITALIANI [Perugia]

FIELD: Legal Support

ACTIVITIES: Organisation, planning and management of courses, seminars and meetings on relevant topics in several fields of Law. It is an association composed of a team of volunteer lawyers, which provides the general public with legal advice and publishes information materials on law.

PAPAVERI ROSSI soc.coop. – ARCI PERUGIA [Perugia]

FIELD: Children and Youth

ACTIVITIES: "Papaveri Rossi" aims to pursue the general interest of the community in social integration of citizens by managing socio-healthcare, educational, cultural and leisure services. The association organises activities, such as civil service addressed to disadvantaged people.

APS "GIANNI BALLERIO" [Perugia]

FIELD: Social and Cultural Advancement

ACTIVITIES: The association deals with issues relating to equal opportunities of women and men, the right to health and the right to education for all. It manages projects focused on social needs, citizens' rights and the rights of children, adolescents and adults even in an international framework.

ANGLAD [Perugia]

FIELD: Drug Dependence

ACTIVITIES: ANGLAD is a network of volunteering associations aimed at preventing and countering drug dependence. The network is intended to provide counselling and support to people who want to be assisted in recovering from drug dependence.

RESPECT Aps [Perugia]

FIELD: Academic Research on Education

ACTIVITIES: Research and pedagogy in collaboration with the University. One of the main projects is called "RispettiAMOci" (addressed to primary schools and lower secondary schools), which is aimed at the enhancement of emotional intelligence of children.

ABIO [Perugia]

FIELD: Children in Hospitals

ACTIVITIES: Abio Perugia Onlus is a volunteering association aimed at the promotion of entertainment activities intended for children in hospitals. Abio cooperates with healthcare member staff and provides support to the families of children.

CONCLUSION

In the project, we prepared and administered an online questionnaire. In addition, we held debates for brainstorming and discussion among the stakeholders/teachers involved in the project, in every testing session we implemented debates and discussion plus a questionnaire prepared by the research group, in the whole duration of the project. The portfolio is considered to be a clear and accessible tool of a suitable length for providing relevant information, which could be useful even within the combined study-work experience. The portfolio is criticised for lacking precise guidelines (i.e. a process) that would help teachers to identify competences acquired by students, as well as the absence of terminology disambiguation supporting the understanding of the instrument itself. It is worth commenting that all educators expressed the real need to have precise guidelines, not because the tools implemented in the Schola project are not useful, but because of the lack of precise guidelines in the Italian school context. In fact, in Italy, the certification of skills, although mandatory at school and elsewhere, still does not find a correspondence in the official ministry guidelines (which are insufficient) and in a shared (which means standardized) and therefore functional method. In this context, the process/method implemented by the Schola project was welcomed in a very positive

manner. All the subjects involved emphasized the importance and the potentiality of the project to deliver shared methods at European level to support educators and accompany them, with structured tools and methods, in the implementation of functional paths to support the students inside and outside the school.

In a moment of discussion with educators and teachers, one intervention of a teacher was particularly interesting: "There is a profound gap, a real gap between directives (not only European but also and above all national ones) and their implementation," he explained. "Some competences, those that correspond to the 4 basic competences of the Common European Framework on the 8 key competences, are effectively 'protected' and cured by the scholastic system ..." Specifically the competencies he was speaking about were 'Communicating in the mother tongue', 'Communicating in foreign languages', 'Mathematical competence and basic skills in science and technology' and 'Digital skills'. Those in effect are the competencies that are more linked with the curriculum, whereas he went on saying: "They remain almost on paper without concrete and effective implementation of the competences that correspond to the 'transversal' competences of the common European framework: 'Learning to learn', 'social and civic competences', 'initiative and entrepreneurial spirit', 'cultural awareness and expression'". About these other 4 key skills, professors complain that even if on paper they have a program and learning objectives to be implemented, in reality, there remains an organizational problem of the system that does not provide for a real implementation. "For example, while for mathematics and science and technology competences we do something at school, ... for the other 4 (transversal) teachers do not have examples and their perception is that there's a lack of awareness to empower them, even if they know they have to follow them. In the Schola's approach, finally, explicit references are inserted and that can serve as a practical guide ..."

The students who participated in the project immediately expressed a great interest in the context of competences, and especially on what they did not know about the possibility of enhancing their experiences outside the school, within the school curriculum in terms of competences (once again, in Italy, there is a lack of information on these issues). Often, the opportunities to volunteer are underestimated by the students, because they are thought to be impossible to reconcile with the curriculum and the burden of school studies. In general, the presentation of useful tools to them and to the educators who

support them, for the documentation of their experience and acquired skills, such as the VAEB, was welcomed. The students expressed their enthusiasm above all in realizing that they could be actively involved in the process, developing "a sense of responsibility, motivation and control" of their experiences. The common thread therefore seems to be the students' development of a sense of effectiveness, of valorisation of their experiences and the awareness reached on the potentialities that the activities can provide in terms of education and life.

During a national seminar implemented at the end of the students' experience, the comment by one of the students' spokespersons was particularly relevant: "Through this experience, we could finally relate with a different environment from the school, which has surely enriched us". She also stated: "We think that these things should be known by our classmates, because they allow us to enhance our educational path and can help us to relate what we do at school with everything we can do outside of school ... The approach to skills which is well explained within this project is often not presented within our school, and for us it was a nice surprise, which allowed us to reason and be more aware of our potential as students and citizens".

The associations involved showed interest and enthusiasm for two fundamental reasons. On the one hand, they have been trying to involve more and more young students and young people in their contexts for years, but once again the lack of information on the opportunities that such a path can offer means that students have little interest and motivation is therefore not stimulated. In this sense, the Schola approach would allow a moment of stimulation and enhancement of volunteer experiences by students and therefore facilitation for associations in the involvement of young people. On the other hand, it was emphasized how difficult it is for associations, although they have tried in recent years, to communicate with schools and to return what has been done by students in terms of experience and skills achieved. In this sense, once again, the project has been assessed as excellent in bridging the gap between school and external environments, judging the tools and methods offered by the project as very functional to promote effective communication between the two environments.

The speaker of one of the stakeholders involved stated: "Unlike what associations are normally limited to do, that is to certify the mere presence of children, for example with final attestations of participation in voluntary activities, the tool is potentially interesting and very useful because a single tool would give the opportunity to certify different competences among them, acquired in the field, while we are usually used to the fact that certification of a competence is usually made by schools/training institutions". He tried to explain how, from the point of view of the boys, the tool would allow them to perform self-assessment, a qualitative reflection on the skills actually acquired. He went on saying: "Each association should be able to guide the young people in the use of the tool, then in self-identification of the acquired skills. Schola's tool could also be really useful to get to know oneself, to refine the capacity for self-criticism or for example to acquire self-awareness about one's entrepreneurial spirit."

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Poland: Breaking the Limits of Formal Education

Agnieszka Borek, Laura Rabiej

INTRODUCTION

The overall scale of engagement in formal volunteering in Poland is relatively low. In 2015, 17.1% of adult Poles declared that they had been engaged in formal volunteering (for NGOs, public institutions, churches or other organisations), while 16.1% participated in informal (not organisation-driven) activity on behalf of the local community, environment, city/village (Makowski 2011). Other studies show a higher level of involvement. However, operational definitions are not coherent. 48% of the respondents in the survey (Hipsz, Wądołowska 2011) declared that they became at least once involved in unpaid work for unknown people, local community or organisation during the last 12 months. The declaration of involvement in formal volunteering peaks to 28% (Hipsz, Wądołowska 2011). The notion of the term 'volunteering' is not clear to all the citizens. When directly asked about the involvement in volunteering, the share of confirmation decreased to 11%.

Indicators of engagement in formal volunteering in previous years were at the similar level: 19% in 2014 (Badora 2014), 18% in 2013 (Adamiak 2014). It is characteristic that mostly young (less than 25 years old) people declare engagement in volunteering. High level of activity among secondary (junior high) schools is caused by obligatory engagement in the voluntary project, demanded by the curriculum. The level of involvement drops among the respondents active on the labour market. Volunteering is the most popular among people having BA or MA diploma, and its occurrence is slightly higher among women.

The low rate of volunteering is caused by two main factors. First of all, there is no such tradition in Poland, because it has never been as

strong as, for example, in Anglo-Saxon countries and it was distorted by the obligatory "social act" during the communist regime in Poland, when volunteering was an act of loyalty to the communist authorities, not an act of social solidarity. Secondly, no one taught students how to help – civic education was neglected in schools for years, even after the fall of communism in Central Europe.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Schola project was carried out in Poland by the Faculty Management and Social Communication, Institute of Public Affairs of Jagiellonian University, which has been acknowledged nationally as a leading provider of training and development in public organisations. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is responsible for that area. It runs several study programmes in public management and social policy studies. It has over 3,000 students. The IPA has a well-resourced research environment built from 2006 to 2008, which seeks to both stimulate research and to ensure quality through careful evaluation of projects. Educational research is an area of strength, which is developing further in scale and quality. The activities carried out in the last decade have focused on supporting the development of the Polish educational system by influencing the shape of pedagogical supervision (school evaluation) as a way to improve schools and develop educational leadership. Currently, the implemented projects focus on the development of key competencies, both by integrating them into the daily practice of teachers as well as by volunteering.

The entities we have invited to cooperate with the IPA within the framework of the Schola project – mentoring for educators to value volunteering – include associations operating throughout Poland, as well as schools. Thanks to that, our educators have diverse experience in working with volunteers; hence their ability to exchange various sorts of information among them and to share good practices. Our network includes seven institutions involved in non-formal education:

- **Four Landscapes Association from Kampinos** operates in several villages adjacent to the Kampinos Forest, which is a National Park. The organisation's goals include sustainable development and improvement of its residents' quality of life. A large part of its activities is addressed to children and youth. Within the Schola activities, the students attended a 4-month project on volunteering for National Parks in Poland.

- **"Street" Foundation** implements an authorial program "Ambassadors of the Impossible", whose main assumption is: "No matter who you are, what you do, you can succeed in life." The Foundation reaches thousands of schoolboys and schoolgirls who want to turn away from negative patterns transmitted within their families (such as violence, alcoholism, unemployment, poverty). It educates future leaders who are ready to invite and support their peers in thinking about dreams and the way to achieve them. Reflection on dreams is the starting point of drawing motivation and strength necessary to bring about changes and achieve goals. In the long-term perspective, the Foundation's activities are intended to contribute to change its attendees' way of thinking about themselves.

- **"Tęcza" (Rainbow) Association/Environmental Self-Help Centre** in Krakow takes care of children and adults with Down syndrome and wants to overcome the fear of people with Down syndrome in the local community, to increase the possibilities of their social activation and normal treatment by people around them. The participants enjoy a variety of therapeutic activities, whose aim is primarily to improve their functioning in everyday life, development of independence and interpersonal skills. The centre conducts some activities, striving to meet the participants' needs and possibilities. These include classes dedicated to cooking, art and technique, IT, sports, music, as well as interpersonal functioning. This year, the Centre carried out the project "3x21" which involved volunteers.

- **King Władysław Jagiełło, Junior High School in Niepołomice,** houses the very resilient "KWIL" (Klub Wspierania Inicjatyw Lokalnych) – Local Initiative Support Club and conducts various actions combined with fun and practice of important skills and attitudes, such as responsibility, respect, tolerance and getting to know other people and oneself. Very often, volunteers carry out activities which take place after the classes, on weekends and even during summer or winter holidays. The group is open to new volunteers and to ideas on how others, oneself or the environment can be helped.

- **Jan Twardowski Junior High School in Zabierzów Bocheński** conducts an authorial project entitled School Creativity League, which aims to shape creative attitudes. The school's mission is to free the students' creative activity, and the League sets the tasks to be solved with creativity. All tasks are carried out by class teams with their tutors, and the assessors include representatives of each class, school management and, in some cases, people from outside. The tasks are directly related to the ceremonies from the school year calendar.

- **Jan Twardowski Primary School in Kłaj** implements the project "An Ingenious Year", during which students take part in 7 different meetings, trying to find answers to questions (e.g. how to transmit a secret message, how do people experience emotions, what do we need mathematics for). They develop the creative and logical thinking ability; they learn to put forward arguments and draw conclusions; they also develop social competences. A group of volunteers operates in the school.

METHOD

"The tool & process" of the Schola project is based on the circular actions that include the reflection about the action, the impact on volunteers' development regarding the key competencies and building an action plan using the conclusions from the previous steps. This approach involves combining the research with the regular work with volunteers and the immediate use of its results for planning and modifying actions. This is how the reflection and assessment are an integral part of the volunteering for better and more efficient enforcement of positive changes in bridging the gap between formal and informal education. It is important because the student development is a dynamic process, and the Schola's tools and process take this dynamic into account. The volunteers-researchers' training addresses the need to develop volunteers' skills in analysing and evaluating their actions and their results.

This circular model is based on the Action Research approach (Sagor 2008) and makes the research important for the learning process of students who used the reflection on and assessment of their competencies. Taking into account the main features of the Action Research, every research conducted by volunteers should be originating in internal needs relating to their activities and to the activities of the task teams they are members of. The welfare of the learners should be the main objective of the development. The approach that we suggest involves engagement in the research activities of a wide group of those whom they concern. It ensures the democratisation of the research process and thereby increases the responsibilities of various people for its conduct. Such conducted research provides an opportunity for a dialogue between teachers, volunteers, educators on the value of students' development. The research itself becomes a part of the learning process for all those who are involved in it (Sagor 2008).

SCHOLA PROCESS IN POLAND

In this section, we thematically summarise the most important themes that emerged while implementing the Schola approach in Poland.
In the first stage of the project operation, our team developed several scenarios of meetings with volunteers to support educators in implementing the Schola model into their practice. We intended to make the proposed theoretical framework more user-friendly and easy to use in the everyday practice. We prepared several workshop modules usable in any configuration. Their logic is to be arranged by the educator working with a group of volunteers, adequately to:

- the knowledge they have about the group's needs and objectives of the activities carried out;
- the stage in the process of the voluntary experience.

We tested all workshop scenarios. We ran the pilot of the workshops modules that helped to validate the value and usability for the educators. After the pilot, we implemented the conclusions and comments and modified the modules.

The next stage was mentoring for educators, which took place in Krakow at Jagiellonian University in the second half of 2017 and at the beginning of 2018. 14 educators and teachers attended the mentoring sessions. During each meeting, we discussed the Schola tools and process. We also prepared several practical scripts and educational modules to support educators in reflecting on and implementing the Schola approach. We collected data by observing the tutors and teachers during the meetings, asking the teaches questions about their comments and perspective and interviewing the teachers and tutors.

During the mentoring sessions, the educators got to know the given tool and after returning to their schools and organisations, they tested it in a group of volunteers and shared the conclusions with other participants (during the subsequent sessions). It was important that the scenarios, as well as the tools, could be used flexibly and the participants knew that they could modify and adapt them to their needs, according to the knowledge they have about the group's needs and the objectives of the activities carried out. The educators were very glad to have learnt about the new tool, it was found to be useful for verifying what young people think about their competences.

Dorota Kulesza, teacher, educator and junior high school headmistress: "I had an opportunity to work with teachers who were the participants of the qualifying course for future education management staff in one of Krakow's in-service teacher training centres. We talked about the importance of shaping competences that the pupils will need at further stages of development, both in personal and professional life. In the discussion, the participants admitted that the largest number of competences was not strengthened until they undertook professional work. They commented with concern on the fact that it was virtually impossible to learn or strengthen empathy, responsibility, entrepreneurship or problem-solving skills, while orientation to result got the highest score and less than half of the respondents indicated teamwork. The initiative, in turn, scored the highest result in the area of non-formal education, which was explained by the fact that participation in various activities required a specific competency from that specific person."

CONCLUSION

In the process, it has been proven that the Schola tools respond to the needs of teachers, educators and volunteers. Educators find the Schola tool and process very useful in working with groups of young volunteers. They appreciate the content and the fact that students' extracurricular activities involve combining the reflection and assessment with the regular work and the immediate use of its results for planning and modifying volunteering actions. The reflection and assessment are an integral part of the volunteering activity as it refers to activities that develop volunteers' skills.

The Schola process is very flexible and particular modules can be used in any configuration. Their logic is arranged by an educator who has adequate knowledge about the needs of the group and objectives of the activities carried out.

The Schola process is attractive for young volunteers who are engaged in activities as well as have fun and are aware of reaching educational goals. It is important for the learning process of students that they use the evaluation tool to examine most of all their work and the work of teams they are members of.

Natalia Szlęzak, the educator of STREET Children's Aid Foundation: "The meetings covered by our work with youth had a very unconstrained character – board games, talks. At some point, we concluded that we wanted to change these meetings into social actions (cleaning up graves, making Christmas cards for the residents). Moreover, it turned out that the young people were more interested in and delighted about doing something for others; they found such activities more attractive. It also turned out that volunteering is not only big actions like The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity or The Noble Box, but also actions that each of us can undertake."

We were also able to see that the Schola tools support young volunteers' development. Educators can see benefits for young volunteers, mainly in raising their awareness of their inner motivation to volunteer, self-confidence, the faith in one's capacities. Volunteers also develop their skills of self-assessment (but mainly as a result of group activities).

One of the most important benefits of using Schola tools is developing the skills of expressing the experience regarding eight key competencies and support young volunteers in understanding the key competencies, naming them and recognising them in the context of particular knowledge and skills.

The tools developed as part of the Schola project help teachers identify these areas in the development of students' key competences which they fail to develop during traditional lessons at school. It helps them appreciate extracurricular activities in which young people become involved, not only from the perspective of developing and strengthening of prosocial attitudes but also as support for the development of competences which are important to eliminate the risk of school failure.

Angelika Niemiec, coordinator of 3x21 volunteering project: "An analysis of our association's needs has become the starting point when deciding to expand the offer and professional cooperation with volunteers. That was the origin of the creation of the project 3x21, aimed at overcoming social barriers in contact with people with Down syndrome and included among others: 21 hours of work with people with Down syndrome, workshops improving the volunteers' qualifications, integration meetings, two sessions of individual summary and conclusions from the volunteers' experience, specifying their strengths and learning processes.

During the first integration meeting, as a coordinator, I asked the future volunteers to draw a human figure, preferably themselves. Then, I looked through these pictures and it was clear that their knowledge was limited, it showed who they were, what they needed (to fulfil their role well) and what they knew. I would like to finish the project with the same action to give them feedback on their work and involvement in volunteering (what they gained from the months of volunteering and what it gave them)".

The Schola project contributed to an in-depth reflection on the role of volunteering in the education process. In the Polish context, it is very important, since Polish volunteering is facing many problems. The main one is that many people do not understand what volunteering is. Nationwide surveys (CEBOS 2011) carried out on the occasion of the European Year of Volunteering show that many Poles identify it, for instance, with sending charity text messages, putting money into a charity can, helping one's family or even free internships and apprenticeships. In such an environment, it is important to talk about volunteering at school, on a daily basis. For some of the young people involved in the Schola project, the big discovery was that volunteering is not only "a noble sacrifice for the good of others", as one of our participants said, but also brings numerous benefits to the volunteers themselves.

In the Primary School in Kłaj, teachers wanted to identify students' awareness of benefits of volunteering. Marzanna Włodek, the teacher: "Among these students, only one person is continuously involved in volunteering (outside the school). Her maturity was visible at once (she is the same age as others, but she had experience), she had a completely different perspective on volunteering and it was easier for her to assess her actions – her stick man clearly stood out. She wrote that she does it selflessly (she gives classes for sick children) – it was her first association, then she does it out of care for others, she does not get money for it, it makes her happy and improves her relationships with others".

The teachers involved in the project appreciated a change of their view of volunteering at school. As they say, their earlier focus was mainly the tasks that the young people were supposed to complete within the framework of volunteering, as well as the organisational and technical context. Currently, they pay more attention to the planning of educational goals to be achieved through a specific volunteering project and to the reflection on how common work has developed young people's competences and how it benefited the people for whom the action was carried out. They also recognise the need for more long-term volunteering activities and placing greater emphasis in school on the persistence and continuity of the students' volunteering activities. A remaining question is how to build a bridge between school and volunteering and, at the same time, avoid treating volunteering instrumentally, through the inclusion of volunteering in the school certificate and, in this way, converting volunteering into another school course or subject.
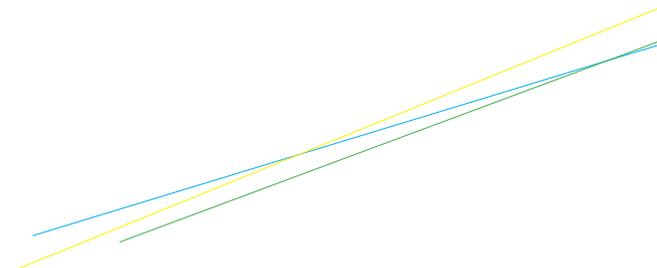
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Slovenia: Balancing between "Pure" and "Impure" Volunteering

Mojca Kovačič, Dan Podjed

INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, organised volunteering is historically strongly present and nowadays well-established and institutionally supported. Already in the 19th century, the Catholic Church had an important role in development of charities and humanitarian aid. In the 20th century and especially in the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e. after the World War II, it was common to volunteer in the social field with humanitarian aims, for example in the context of fire brigades or Red Cross, as well as in local tourist, cultural and sports organisations. After World War II, many young people also joined the national post-war reconstruction works organised by the Yugoslav State.

In the 21st century, volunteering has become even more nationally recognised and emphasised as an important contribution to society and citizenship. The Law on Volunteering, which was adopted in 2011, officially legalised, formulated and positioned volunteering as socially beneficial work of individual and voluntary organisations. The Slovenian Philanthropy became the "umbrella organisation", which carries out professional training of volunteering, trains volunteers and mentors and maintains an online portal dedicated to seekers and providers of voluntary activities. In addition to promotion and providing information on demand as well as offering volunteer activities, this non-governmental organisation also offers thematic training programmes for future volunteers.

With the implementation of the Volunteering Act (2011), the area of volunteering in Slovenia was legally formalised for the first time. The Act defines volunteering and emphasises its importance, defines

the basic principles of volunteering, the conditions for performing organised volunteering, the rights and obligations of volunteers and volunteer organisations and the role of the state, self-governing local communities, volunteer and non-profit organisations working in the field of volunteering, monitoring and encouraging and developing organised volunteering.

The Schola approach was tested in a specific national context and also in the institutional context of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), where the project was carried out. The Research Centre has a multidisciplinary character; in addition to the humanities, its spheres of research also cover the natural and social sciences. ZRC SAZU's competences include a scientific, analytical, and synthetic multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach, extensive knowledge and experience connected with compiling databases, designing thematic maps and graphic material, and preparing various publications. However, ZRC SAZU is not an education institution; its character is mainly research-oriented. Therefore, the project team in Slovenia did not have so much hands-on experience with pedagogical work and education as other partners. This also showed in meetings with stakeholders, where we were supposed to teach the experienced mentors and teachers. To solve this situation, we often let them guide the process and often invited them to take the leading role during presentations and testing of the Intellectual Outputs, designed in the Schola project context. The approach has proven to be important for building trust and collaboration at stakeholders' meetings and other project activities, since we managed to make a shift from expert mindset to people-centred mindset for designing and co-creating solutions and tools in the context of the project (Sanders 2008).

BRINGING TOGETHER EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING AND VOLUNTEERING

The national Educational Research Institute defined an early school leaver as an individual who stopped attending an educational or training programme and did not actually finish it. In their report, they emphasised that there were no current policies on a national level to prevent early school leaving (ESL). It was also stated that there are no reports on ESL and therefore no national statistics about it. There was also no official, comprehensive strategy on a national level to struggle against ESL in Slovenia. However, we were able to obtain a partial

overview of the ESL statistics by the statistics of the Employment Service of Slovenia for 2016. According to the database, there were 755 unemployed persons under 24 years with unfinished primary school, and 2,637 people with unfinished secondary school.

The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Professional Training has an important role in the field of ESL . In 2007, they published a handbook for preventing early school leaving and later cooperated in EU Erasmus+ project CroCoos for the implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive early warning system and cross-sectoral approaches to prevent ESL. The direct link between volunteering and early school leaving was made through the Comenius project Success at School through Volunteering (2012–2014) with the aim to offer youngsters living in difficult areas a pedagogical support to enhance their voluntary involvement and improve their chance to succeed at school. A direct and more sustainable work with early school leavers is provided by the BOB Institute, an institution which takes part in the Schola project as a stakeholder. Through their work, they recognised that innovative and creative approach as well as voluntary work as a form of informal learning leads to social re-integration and development of social entrepreneurship, as well as increases opportunities for self-realisation among youngsters.

Among young people, volunteering has been attractive primarily due to the activities carried out of school, but one can notice that it has become more present in secondary schools, since the school system recognises voluntary activities within the framework of the so-called compulsory elective courses where students have to obtain a certain number of hours of extracurricular activities. In this way, formal education on the one hand supports informal and non-formal education, but this is only quantitative and not qualitative evaluation. The Schola approach has therefore proven to be interesting as well as useful in promotion of qualitative assessment of volunteering among youngsters.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE SCHOLA PROJECT AND METHODOLOGY

In the Schola project, we invited those institutions that have a strong connection with volunteering as well as knowledge in the field, such as the BOB Institute and the Slovene Philanthropy, as well as secondary schools that carry out volunteering activities in addition to formal education and involve, evaluate and implement it in various ways in their educational programs.

Slovenska filantropija [the Slovene Philanthropy] is the umbrella organisation for volunteering in Slovenia and therefore the main contact point for all the questions regarding schools or any other volunteering subject on the national level. They organise and popularize volunteering and keep reminding the society about the benefits of volunteering. Zavod BOB [the BOB Institute] is an organisation that takes care of dropouts and motivates them for getting back to school with different (manual, art, psychological etc.) workshops and projects.

In addition to these two institutions, we also involved several secondary schools, including Srednja zdravstvena šola Ljubljana [The Secondary Nursing School, Ljubljana], Srednja gozdarska in lesarska šola Postojna [Forestry and Wood Processing School, Postojna], Biotehniški izobraževalni center Ljubljana [Biotechnical Educational Center, Ljubljana] and Gimnazija Jožeta Plečnika [Jože Plečnik Gimnasium]. All these schools have well-established volunteering activities. In addition, mentors at these schools have rich voluntary experiences and are experienced mentors for young volunteers. The institutions Zavod za vzgojo in izobraževanje Logatec [Institute of Upbringing and Education Logatec] and Srednja poklicna in strokovna šola Bežigrad-Ljubljana [Secondary Vocational and Technical School Bežigrad] started with the implementation of voluntary work among students within the Schola project. Volunteering was a relatively new field for the school as well as for the mentors. We wish to emphasise that these two organisations are somewhat specific. Institute of Upbringing and Education Logatec takes care of boys with criminal or problematic past. They keep encouraging them to finish their education and also try to "nudge" them back to society and proactive life. Due to the departure of one coordinator of volunteer activities at the institution and the overwork of another coordinator who could also not attend the meetings within the Schola, they resigned as stakeholders in the training program (IO2). Secondary Vocational and Technical School Bežigrad, Ljubljana has less successful and motivated students and migrants with lack the lack of knowledge of the Slovenian language. Their voluntary activities were focused on tutoring among students.

METHODOLOGY

A series of meetings with mentors in schools and institutions was conducted for the implementation of the School of Accession. The first Intellectual Output (IO1) was implemented with volunteers in five secondary schools and in two institutions, one of them later resigned due to the inability to implement the set goals. Volunteering actions were conducted with 189 students, 109 male and 80 female; 10 educators were involved. Volunteer actions were mostly conducted in multigenerational centres, kindergartens, retirement homes and hospitals in a form of organizing workshops and roundtables about perceiving and accepting differences, tutoring pupils in primary schools and secondary schools, environmental care, helping local authorities in different actions. Mentors were providing feedbacks at our common sessions, in a written form through questionnaires and through personal communication. The second Intellectual Output (IO2) was presented and tested only with mentors in a form of five sessions that were performed at ZRC SAZU. The sessions contained power point presentations on the topic from IO2, followed by exercises for implementing IO2 and open debate about the topic, its shortcomings and advantages.

THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF THE COMPETENCE APPROACH

As it was proven during the Schola project, mentoring for volunteers and the volunteering activities vary greatly from school to school. Some mentors have regular weekly sessions with volunteers, but most of the mentors try to find the time to meet with the volunteers within the given schedules, which was pointed out as being very limiting in the activities with the volunteers. The organisation of time and coordination of activities with the volunteers, who have very different schedules, was in fact proven to be the biggest issue preventing a successful implementation of the Schola approach. As we determined, the volunteers usually meet during class hours, before or after classes. For example, a mentor who also works as a librarian encounters volunteers in the library and only in one case they meet weekly at special lessons devoted to volunteering.

In most schools and institutions, they try to regularly record the work process and the competences acquired in the context of voluntary work; however, they recognise the translation of the key competences defined by the EU to everyday life situations in connection to volunteering as too complicated. One of the schools uses the Nefiks system, which is a Slovenian counterpart of the Youthpass system. They confirmed that the system for recording informally acquired knowledge is useful, but it still requires too much time and skills to enter the achievements and results in the system. That is why they trained mentors among pupils who help other volunteers in introducing and confirming volunteer activities (at the above-mentioned school there are about 150 volunteers). At one of the schools, the mentor motivates a large number of students for volunteering every year, which they perform in a slightly different way, with a group of students usually going to elderly homes or hospitals where they present short cultural programmes. However, the mentor has a negative attitude towards competence recording. Therefore, this kind of formalised recording is not carried out. Instead, a regular oral communication between the mentor and the volunteers takes place, in which the volunteering experience is evaluated and reflected on with students. The negative attitude towards the Nefiks' activity recording approach by an experienced mentor is definitely a contribution to the development of the Schola approach, which is why we explain it below.

Nefiks is a Slovenian institution that assists young people and youth organisations in recording, presenting and promoting informally acquired knowledge and competences. They developed the electronic portfolio (e-Nefiks) which was presented in a session with the Schola team. So far, only one school is using Nefiks, while others are still using an analogue system of recording the competences and other data about volunteering activities of their pupils. The school that uses e-Nefiks has trained young mentors to help other student volunteers in recording of volunteer activities and competences.

The mentor emphasises that the essence of volunteering is in humanity, solidarity, compassion, help and support. She also emphasises the importance of developing cooperative relationships between volunteers and the so-called "users" of volunteering; she strongly believes that the evaluation of competences and volunteering is a contradictory concept to volunteering. In addition, she emphasises that the assessment of volunteering through achieved competencies turns volunteering from the humanitarian to the market and business sectors.

Referring to Christian Laval (2003), who claims that the school is not an enterprise, she mentions that competences advocate the neoliberal interests of employers and that they use new forms of human resource management. Consequently, employers look at the workforce as a "stock" of competences and wish to rationalise and instrumentalise it as much as possible. She emphasises that in fact volunteering should be a result of internal motivation, connected to the needs of the "user" or "beneficiary". She understands the concept of competences as a product of the European Union and emphasises that the criticisms of the neoliberal system (Laval 2003) highlights the danger of the system that promotes the transition of education to the market sector.

The mentor's reflection mostly relates to the processes that are taking place after completing formal education and entering the labour market and not to the evaluation of competences in the prevention of the ESL. Since we were also talking about the assessment of competences as a means of facilitating the transition to the labour market (which was also confirmed mostly by mentors from the vocational educational schools), her reflection was in place. A wider debate arouses also in relation to the national web-based Nefiks competence evaluation system, which was more attractive for young users from a technological point of view and was presented at one of the meetings. Furthermore, the exploitation of the workforce was discussed as a possible side effect of volunteering.

Such a discussion was also part of a national seminar held in May 2017. The seminar, titled *Volunteering between Altruism and Egoism: Why It Is Worth Helping*, was part of the Schola project dissemination activities. The long debate in fact started already in 2008, when we organised a workshop at the conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA), which took place in Ljubljana. John Donne's famous meditation that "No man is an island" was a starting point of the workshop which focused on volunteering as an essentially human activity connecting people from different social and cultural backgrounds. At the event, the diverse aspects of volunteering were presented and discussed through real-life examples and cases, with a particular focus on the variation in extent, style and context of volunteer activities in different countries. The event and a special issue of *Traditiones* journal, published in 2014, showed that voluntary activities exist not only to unselfishly help others, but also to improve an individual's knowledge and reputation. Through their activities, volunteers advance in social status and climb ladders of esteem, broaden social networks and expand social capital. The debate at the

workshop and in the journal, which continued in the Schola project, emphasized that voluntary activities are not based exclusively in selfless concern for the welfare of others. Nonetheless, volunteering can be still viewed and treated as "social glue" which binds individuals together and which establishes and strengthens a community (Podjed 2014, 8). Bénédicte Halba for example clearly explains in her article, published in the special issue, that volunteers can build their own identities, at both personal and collective levels. This is in her opinion part of the process of European citizenship: being aware that being a member of a society is based on a series of rights, but also brings with it a number of responsibilities for all of its members, for many and diverse other "citizens" (Halba 2014, 80). In short, the personal reasons are secondary in comparison to the final result of volunteering, i.e. strengthening of the community.

Anica Emil-Podboj, a mentor to several volunteers, told us how she sees volunteer work and how this work is enriching her as a mentor: "As a mentor to volunteers, I am happy to get in touch with the 'other side' of students' lives. Each generation of students is special; in each generation, there were many volunteers who initially wanted to be volunteers only to get compulsory hours required by the school system, but later the voluntary work turned into their way of life. Each student has some special talents, which we have jointly discovered and shared among each other. With their selfless volunteering, they give an example to the younger generation and at the end of the school year, they also receive the recognition of the Slovene Philanthropy. They also contribute to the reputation of the Forestry and Wood Processing School Postojna in the public. They give hope to those who need help and cheer them up. Although a great deal of work and effort has to be put into the network of volunteer activities, I am always encouraged by the youngsters' sincerity, cordiality, honesty and energy to do something new, something good."

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOLA TOOL AMONG MENTORS

The second Intellectual Output (IO2), produced in the Schola project, was based on the implementation of materials among mentors of volunteering work and was very positively accepted. Meetings took place in almost full occupation, while five students from the Forestry and Wood Processing School Postojna, who are being trained as mentors for students of volunteers, also joined the training. Each presentation, translated in the Slovene language and prepared as a MS PowerPoint presentation, was followed by a debate about the previous knowledge and understanding of the topic and possibilities for its further use. Mentors, for example, had never encountered the terms 'growth mindset' and 'connective communication', while the terms and concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning were more familiar to them. Each time, they emphasised the importance of exercises that were part of the tool, such as 'quick recipes' that they can use at school. In some meetings, we also included some exercises that we found on the web and were related to the topic.

At the BOB Institute, where special programs focus on young people who have already dropped out of school for various reasons, different approaches to education have been used, since the existing ones were not successful. This institute is the only stakeholder familiar with the existing EU directives, competence approaches and other EU projects that work in the field of education and it actually integrates them in their work. They emphasize that combining different learning approaches, such as the ones that Schola proposes, is the most effective.

Pupils, future mentors who came from the Postojna Forestry and Wood Processing School, have many personal experiences with volunteering. They emphasised that the topics presented in the framework of IO2 are useful in everyday life. They also mentioned the importance of awareness that non-formal and informal learning are a part of lifelong learning. The mentors mentioned the importance of evaluating everything we did as an important source of experience and knowledge. All mentors perceive the topics, presented in the context of IO2, as being important for education and support of volunteer mentors. As already mentioned, they mostly emphasised the importance of practical exercises for understanding the concepts under consideration. Themes and exercises will be used in formal educational classes, classroom classes, volunteer meetings, workshops and camps where they work as volunteers or mentors.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the volunteering either in a form of evaluation of the competences, as proposed by the Schola approach, or at least in a form of some recognition of the effort and time that individuals invest in the voluntary activity is of significant importance for youngsters. The Slovene Philanthropy has formalised some of the forms of evaluation of volunteering, thus encouraging schools, mentors and students to participate. Thus, they award the title *The Heroes of our Time* to organisations who demonstrate that their work in the field of volunteering is satisfactorily. They also award mentors, since every year they award the *Mentor of the Year*. In 2018, a participant of the Schola project trainings was nominated for the award.

Each of participating schools has a different approach to evaluating volunteer work, mostly through receiving a recognition award at the end of the year. However, through meetings with volunteer mentors, it turned out that they also need a kind of recognition of their work. Mentors are usually already hard-pressed with school obligations and are also mentoring as volunteers. The time left for such activities is limited; therefore, all mentors emphasise the inadequate value of mentoring young volunteers. Hence, one of the important ways to promote volunteering in the school environment is to show recognition, support and evaluation of the work of mentors. In most cases, one mentor leads almost thirty volunteers, which means that either the disburdening of these mentors from other work or the redistribution of mentoring work between several mentors would enable a visible change in this area.

Changes in the existing school structures are slow and require a lot of effort. Presenting the Schola approach through e-books is one way through which we might try to expand innovative thinking among the largest number of teachers and others involved in educational processes. The toughness of the existing approaches in education is one of the burning topics that some people already realize and can, with awareness, contribute to the quality of education in the existing frameworks. The next step is to enforce changes in the existing educational system, which will, on the basis of examples of good practices and with the help of professional staff, come across a system that will make education and learning closely related to everyday life.

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Perspectives: Schola - a process with a future to combat ESL in Europe

Bénédicte Halba, Benjamin Arino

The Schola project aimed at designing a tool and a method for professionals – educators at school and outside school- to equip them to identify and assess skills and competences acquired by youngsters thanks to an extra-curricular activity. The activity selected for the Schola was a volunteering as it has been proven to be an innovative pedagogical approach for acquiring a non-formal and informal learning (i.e. *European Year of Volunteering*, Comission 2011).

The Schola approach combined the results of two former European projects. The first one "Assessing a Voluntary experience", designed the first portfolio to identify and assess a voluntary experience - it was used in France and Italy for the national testing as a useful tool to be used to apply the Schola process (4 step approach). As the VAEB portfolio also exists in English, German, Polish and Hungarian, it could contribute to the future use of the Schola process. Another European project "Success at school through volunteering" (SAS; University of Northampton & iriv, 2012-2014) considered a voluntary experience as a meaningful way for youngsters facing difficulties at school or already early school leavers to re-engage at school. The training that was designed for youngsters for the purpose of the SAS and applied since then in France among youngsters living in sensitive areas (SAS in Essonne) could also usefully complete the Schola process.

A third European project the "Junior Citizen for Volunteering- JuCiVol" has designed a pedagogical approach - a tutoring for youngsters excluded from education, training and employment (the so-called NEETs) and a mentoring for professionals - to combat early school leaving. It addresses older youngsters than the Schola project - from 16 to 30 years. A bridge could be made among the JuCiVol and the Schola

approach as it is supportive for educators working with youngsters in secondary school who have already left school. The proposed connection to other projects is both a continuum and a main asset for the sustainability of the Schola. If youngsters aged 14 to 16 years old get familiar with the Schola approach based on volunteering, it will be easier afterwards for educators to re-engage them in education, training or employment when they are 16 to 30 years. The sooner youngsters are faced to volunteering the better they will be convinced to volunteer for building a professional or educative future.

The Schola approach has been an innovative process in many ways. The French team that initiated the project in 2016 was composed of a secondary school - the College Blaise Pascal in Massy (a sensitive area in the south of Paris) - and a research institute more familiar with the European perspective (iriv). They had already worked together on the ground with youngsters involved in an action to promote volunteering (2014-2016). After two years of common work for the Schola, the Belgian and Italian partners initiated national projects among youngsters living in sensitive areas (since 2018). The Karel de Grote University has implemented actions in three schools around Antwerp (Belgium). The University of Perugia has started supporting students for the compulsory internship they have to implement before they leave school.

The collaborative process implemented since the beginning of the Schola - each of the partners bringing to the project its knowledge (either in educational sciences, education or volunteering) - has contributed to the achievement of the expected results - three Intellectual outputs and even more. On the basis of this fruitful collaboration, the Schola team from Belgium, France, Italy, Poland and Slovenia decided to go on with the challenging topic of volunteering as an innovative way to support youngsters and educators. This time the project should tackle the issue of diversity - in the profiles of youngsters and educators but also in the pedagogic strategies to be tested and implemented among them – and volunteering as a way to bridge the gap between formal, informal and non-formal learning.

The Schola approach is an "alternative" kind of pedagogy based on the free will of educators and youngsters. It shouldn't be compulsory otherwise it would lose its main purpose, involving youngsters on a voluntary basis to join extra-curricular activities with the support of educators also recruited on a voluntary basis. For both youngsters and educators, the mutual reward is to have the opportunity to work

differently with each other's and together with different professionals. If the involvement is voluntary, they have to respect a mutual agreement: the educators agree to support youngsters to re-engage them at school and youngsters agree to be active students, attending regularly the pedagogical sessions and willing to implement an action on the ground for others - in associations, at school or in any other relevant place.

This mutual involvement may be considered as a "social contract" (Rousseau 1762), combining not only an educative but also citizen perspective. The more youngsters and educators are aware of this tacit agreement, the more chance they will have to combat early school leaving as it is a two-way process.
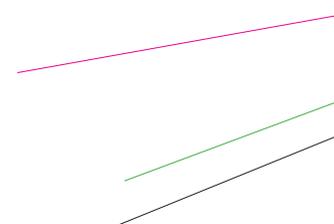
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BRIDGES BETWEEN INTELECTUAL OUTPUTS

This e-book is a final publication of the Schola project. It is based upon two previous intellectual outputs designed throughout the project:

1. **A tool** - "a portfolio" understood as a 4 step approach from experience to competence - to identify and assess the informal and nonformal learning acquired by youngsters outside school thanks to a voluntary experience. It is available in English and translated in the 5 national languages of the project (French, Italian, Belgian, Polish and Slovenian).

2. **A mentoring** to use the tool and process addressing educators - understood in a broad sense, combining educators outside and inside school – in order to take into account and/or assess the competences acquired by youngsters useful at school.

Both intellectual outputs are available at:
http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/outputs

BELGIAN

Deze e-book is de finale publicatie van het Schola project. Het is gebaseerd op twee eerdere intellectuele outputs die ontwikkeld zijn doorheen het project.

1. Een tool - "een portfolio", te begrijpen als een 4 fasen aanpak van ervaring tot competentie – om informeel en non formeel leren van leerlingen buiten de school (in vrijwilligerswerk), te identificeren en te evalueren. Het is beschikbaar in het Engels en het is vertaald in de vijf nationale talen van het project (Frans, Italiaans, Nederlands, Pools en Sloveens).

2. Een leidraad, mentoring voor leerkrachten en opvoeders – te begrijpen in de ruime betekenis; namelijk zowel de opvoeders in als buiten de school - om de tool te gebruiken en in te zetten met als doel competenties die jongeren hebben bereikt en die zinvol zijn binnen school, te waarderen en/of te evalueren.

Ga naar:
http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/blog/belgium/projectvoorstelling

ITALIAN

Questo e-book è una pubblicazione finale del progetto Schola. Si basa su due precedenti risultati intellettuali progettati nel corso del progetto:

1. Uno strumento - "un portfolio" inteso come un approccio in 4 fasi dall'esperienza alla competenza - per identificare e valutare l'apprendimento informale e non formale acquisito dai giovani fuori dalla scuola grazie ad un'esperienza di volontariato. È disponibile in inglese e tradotto nelle 5 lingue nazionali del progetto (francese, italiano, belga, polacco e sloveno).

2. Un tutorato per utilizzare lo strumento e il processo rivolto agli educatori - inteso in senso ampio, come gli educatori all'esterno e all'interno della scuola - per tenere conto e / o valutare le competenze acquisite dai giovani che possono essere utili a scuola.

Vai a:
http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/blog/italy/presentazione-del-progetto

FRENCH

Ce livre numérique (e-book) est la publication finale du projet Schola. Il se base, entre autres, sur les deux productions intellectuelles élaborées pendant le projet:

1. Un outil – un portfolio -, pris dans le sens d'une approche méthodologique en quatre étapes – de l'expérience à la compétence – pour identifier et évaluer les apprentissages non formels et informels des jeunes, acquis en dehors de l'école, grâce à une expérience bénévole. Il est disponible en Anglais et traduit dans les cinq langues des pays partenaires (Français, Italien, Néerlandais, Polonais et Slovène).

2. Un guide pour accompagner les éducateurs à utiliser cet outil (portfolio) et, le cas échéant, l'enrichir d'autres méthodes. Le terme « éducateurs » est pris au sens large du terme, enseignants, éducateurs, responsables associatifs..., afin de repérer et/ou évaluer les compétences acquises par les jeunes, et leur valorisation/validation dans le cadre scolaire.

Pour y accéder:
http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/blog/france/presentation-du-projet

POLISH

Ten e-book jest końcową publikacją projektu Schola. Powstał w oparciu o dwie publikacje opracowane wcześniej w ramach projektu:

1. "Portfolio" opisujące czteroetapowy model pracy z wolontariuszami: od zdobywania doświadczenia do nabycia kompetencji. Ma na celu identyfikację i ocenę rezultatów nieformalnego i pozaformalnego uczenia się młodzieży uczestniczącej w wolontariacie poza szkołą. Model jest dostępny w języku angielskim i został przetłumaczony na pięć języków narodowych partnerów projektu (francuski, włoski, flamandzki, polski i słoweński).

2. Poradnik dla edukatorów i nauczycieli zawierający narzędzia pomocne w pracy z młodzieżą. Zawiera podstawy teoretyczne, praktyczne wskazówki oraz ćwiczenia ułatwiające ocenę kompetencji nabytych w trakcie wolontariatu i uwzględnianie ich w pracy z uczniami w szkole.

http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/blog/poland/projekt-schola-podstawowe-informacje

SLOVENIAN

Pričujoča e-knjiga je končna publikacija projekta Schola in temelji na dveh predhodnih intelektualnih dosežkih, ki sta nastala v okviru projekta.

1. Orodje »portfelj, razumljen kot štiristopenjski pristop od izkušnje do kompetenc« pomaga identificirati in ovrednotiti neformalno in priložnostno učenje, ki so ga mladi izkusili v prostovoljskih izkušnjah izven šole. Orodje je dostopno v angleškem in petih nacionalnih jezikih (francoskem, belgijskem, italijanskem, poljskem in slovenskem jeziku).

2. Mentorstvo za uporabo orodja in procesa je namenjeno edukatorjem - tako učiteljem kot mentorjem izven šol -, da bi ustrezno upoštevali in/ali ocenili kompetence, ki so jih mladi pridobili in jim koristijo v šoli.

Dostop na:
http://www.schola-erasmus.eu/blog/slovenia/predstavitev-projekta

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Karel de Grote University College (KdG; www.kdg.be) is a large-scale higher education institution in the northern part of Belgium. KdG is founded in 1994 when 13 Catholic University Colleges in Antwerp merged into KdG. It is now the biggest university college in the region with approximately 1100 staff, 13500 students, 16 bachelor's degrees, 4 bachelor after bachelor's, 9 postgraduates, 1 master's degree and 1 master after master. Other educational programmes include advanced bachelor's, international degree programmes as well as two English exchange programmes. KdG supports sustainable development for students, staff and society, this in mutual interaction and based upon an inviting learning, living and working environment. The aim is to get the best out of everyone and to strive for excellence together. Driven by values inspired by Christian principles and open to other ideologies, KdG creates challenging and motivating tailor-made learning contexts for anyone who wants to develop into a professional with personality. The college thinks ahead and has a feeling for the dynamics of a rapidly changing global context. They share knowledge and invest in strong collaborations with their partners. They strongly believe that team work allows both students and staff members to acquire competences – such as knowledge, skills, insights and attitudes – that are essential in a working context as well as in the broader context of our society.

Sofie Peetroons is a Master of Pedagogical Sciences and finished Postgraduate Studies in Mediation. She has been working for KdG since 2016 as a lecturer and coach in pedagogical and educational topics. She also has experience in people management and working with volunteers (2015-2016). She was previously an educator in social sciences, competence- and skill-orientated lessons, communication and interaction skills. She has engaged in cross-border projects and she co-wrote a study guide "GIL! Goesting in Leren" for the VZW Sint-Angela-Montfort College (2008-2015). She has also authored a manual "Social Sciences" published by Plantyn. She was previously a lecturer for the Catholic University of Louvain (2005-2008) in intercultural education and pedagogical skills. She began her professional career at CIO Training

Center (1997-2005) as a software trainer, responsible for teaching software programmes, writing manuals, doing long-term project work in several companies, coaching employers and training internal communication strategies.

Wouter Smets educates teachers at the Karel de Grote University College. Before that, he was a secondary education teacher, specialising in history. He lectures on educational philosophy and instructional design. His research is focused on urban education and teachers' competences to address differences among pupils. Driven by a concern on the large gap between educational theory and practice, he has coordinated several research and innovations projects with a focus on differentiated instruction. These projects share a strong focus on participatory approaches in order to achieve joint psychological ownership of scholars and practitioners. Recent publications include: Smets, W. (2017), High quality differentiated instruction – a checklist for professional development on handling differences in the general education classroom, Universal Journal of Educational Research, 5 (11), 2074-2080. Smets, W., & Struyven, K. (2018). Power relations in educational scientific communication—a critical analysis of discourse on learning styles. Cogent Education, 5(1), 1429722. doi:10.1080/2331186X.2018.1429722

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PERUGIA
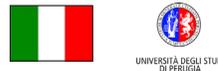
The University of Perugia (www.unipg.it) founded in 1308, is one of the oldest universities in Europe. Today, research, education and consulting activities are organised in 16 Departments, with about 23,500 students, 1,100 professors and researchers and 1,000 staff members. In recent years, the University has undertaken a broad renewal of its programs and curricula, which prepare students to meet the demands of the labour market and to satisfy the needs for innovation in private and public sectors. With its wide offer of degree programs, covering nearly all fields of study, the University combines a long and solid tradition of excellence with a commitment to innovation and an interdisciplinary approach. Post-graduate degrees are offered in top rated specialisation schools and doctoral programs, as well a variety of masters programs in the various academic disciplines. On the international level, the University remains firmly committed to developing collaborative relationships with EU and non EU Universities, to facilitate and improve international advanced study opportunities for its students. Currently we have established working agreements with 361 institutions of higher learning throughout the European Union, and about 90 cooperation agreements with EU and extra-EU universities. Several degree programs available at the University of Perugia already confer double degrees or European degree.

Marco Bartolucci, post-doctoral researcher, PhD in neurosciences. His research interests include prevention and countering of school dispersion, cognitive empowerment, reading and narrative listening processes, relations between

neurosciences and learning. As a clinician and researcher, he is interested in learning disabilities, school inclusion and processes of learning and cognitive empowerment. He also deals with software for cognitive rehabilitation and educational strategies through augmented reality devices. His publications include Dispersione scolastica: Ascoltare i protagonisti per comprenderla e prevenirla (edited by, with F. Batini, FrancoAngeli, 2016), Lettura e dispersione (ed. by, with I. D. M. Scierri, R. Salvato, FrancoAngeli, 2018), Batini, F., Bartolucci, M., & De Carlo, E. (2017). Fight Dispersion Through Education: The Results of the First Cycle of the NoOut Project. Mind, Brain, and Education; F.Batini, M.Bartolucci, A.Timpone (2018) "The effects of reading aloud in the primary school". In Psychology and Education Journal; F. Batini, M. Bartolucci, E. De Carlo (2018) "I feel good at school! Reducing school discomfort levels through integrated interventions". In: Athens journal of education; M. Bartolucci, F. Batini (2018) "The effects of a narrative intervention program in people living with dementia" In: Psychology and Neuroscience.

Federico Batini, associate professor of Experimental Pedagogy at the FISSUF Department of the University of Perugia. Among the last publications on the topic: with S. Giusti (edited by), Imparare dalla lettura (Loescher, 2013); with M. Bartolucci (ed. by), Dispersione scolastica. Ascoltare i protagonisti per comprenderla e prevenirla (FrancoAngeli, 2016); C'era una volta un pezzo di legno (FrancoAngeli, 2016); Dropout (Fuorionda, 2014 Premio Italiano di Pedagogia) and, among others, the contribution on Rivista (with M. Bartolucci and M. E. De Carlo): Fight Dispersion through Education: The Results of the First Cycle of the NoOut Project, "Mind, Brain, and Education", (nov. 2017), Tra lettura e dispersione in Lettura e dispersione (ed. by I. D. M. Scierri, M. Bartolucci, R. Salvato, FrancoAngeli, 2018). He coordinates the international research network on school dispersion (IReNE) and leads the periodical Lifelong, Lifewide Learning. He founded the volunteering movement on reading aloud (LaAV) and devised the method of narrative guidance.

Alberto Santoro, graduated in International Political Science and specialised in European Project Management, SMEs Internationalisation and Public Communication. After having collaborated on EU topics as a journalist with local daily newspapers, he carried out a traineeship at the Council of the European Union (DG F Press, Communication and Transparency). He has been working as EU Project Manager in several institutions and associations, dealing with the European Structural and Investment Funds. At the Enterprise Europe Network of the European Commission, he worked as an expert on the 7th EU FP for Research and Technological Development and the Horizon 2020 Programme. He has gained experiences in specialised translations as well as in tourism industry. He regularly participates as EU Affairs Communication Specialist in the plenary meetings of the Club of Venice, network of the communication directors and senior communication specialists from the EU Member States, institutions and candidate countries.

Collège Blaise Pascal (http://www.clg-pascal-massy.ac-versailles.fr/) from Essonne (project leader) has 450 students, aged 11 to 16 years. The Collège belongs to the Priority Educative Areas (Réseau d'éducation prioritaire) which demonstrates the same characteristics as the Urban Sensitive areas (high poverty rate, high unemployment rate, many single parents…). It is located in Massy, a town with around 45,000 inhabitants in the South of Paris. At the Collège Blaise Pascal, the teacher and coordinator in charge of the network Success at School in Essonne has played an active role in the experiment conducted by the French partner of the SAS project (2013-2014). The SAS continues thanks to the close relationship with iriv conseil. The project focuses on creating social cohesion and building links with families, inhabitants and professionals working with them; these are educators, teachers in colleges, associations from the different districts of the City, public services working in the neighbourhood. The Collge Blaise Pascal has a close relationship with the Cultural Centre Salle Paul B and the Opéra de Massy, which offers cultural activities addressing young audiences and tries to involve inhabitants in its cultural programmes.

Benjamin Arino is the head of the secondary school Collège Blaise Pascal. He holds a Master 2 (D.E.A) in Medieval History. He joined the Ministry for National Education in 2003 as a Councillor in Education (CPE). He worked for several secondary schools from 2003 to 2009. Since then he has worked in schools within sensitive urban areas – Evry, Grigny, and Massy (Essonne). He was deputy head at the secondary school Collège Pablo Neruda in Grigny. Since 2015, he has been head of the secondary school Collège Blaise Pascal in Massy. He has been involved in several projects defending citizenship and republican values: secularism, fraternity, solidarity. The school is viewed as an example of a democratic organisation. Benjamin Arino was involved in the previous action implemented by iriv to enhance volunteering among youngsters. He is the leader and legal representative of the Schola project.

Rachel Savoie graduated in physics and began her current career in 1998 at the Collège Blaise Pascal. In 2000, she decided to teach in sensitive education areas in order to apply pedagogy focused on projects. Each year she conducts scientific workshops as extra-curricular activities. For the past five years, she has been in charge of the option "discovery of the professional world" among pupils aged 14-16 years (last year of the college). She is a coordinator of the network priority education in Massy, consisting of eight primary schools and the Collège Blaise Pascal. Its aim is to encourage success at school among diverse pupils. Since 2015, she has been a member of the citizen council in Massy, most involved in associations. She has coordinated the promotion of volunteering among students of the Collège Blaise Pascal along with the Centre Salle Paul B.

Fernando Rosa is a graduate in Sports Science and Coaching with a specialisation in swimming and football from the London Metropolitan University. He has worked for public and private primary and secondary schools in London as a sports teacher before moving to France in 2013. In France, he started to work in a sensitive education area in a secondary school, Collège Romain Rolland in Bagneux, as an Assistant Coordinator for a dispositive called "Classe Relais" that focuses on early school leavers. In September 2015, he joined the secondary school Collège Blaise Pascal as a Prevention and Safety Assistant. He works mainly with students with whom he conducts workshop on how to release stress and, improve concentration, as well as diplomacy and self-control.

The Institute of Research and Information on Volunteering (www.iriv. net) is a private and non-profit institute, independent of public administrators and economic interests. It aims to improve knowledge and practice through lifelong learning principles within the non-profit sector. It focused on volunteering between 1997 and 2003, which later broadened into the field of migration studies. In 2000, it created a profit organisation iriv Conseil in order to carry on studies and trainings both on the national and European level. The results of iriv's projects are available at www.iriv-vaeb.net for volunteering and www.iriv-migrations.net for migration issues together with a general portal www.iriv-publications.net. Since 2004, the Institute has published an electronic review (www.benevolat.net) together with a newsletter dedicated to migration issues (www.club-iriv.net). Since 1998, it has organised or co-organised several conferences and seminars both on national and European levels (France, Austria, Netherlands…). It has conducted two practical projects since 2012: for migrants at the Cité des Métiers (club of iriv) and for youngsters in Essonne (together with a secondary school, city hall and cultural institution)

Bénédicte Halba, PhD in Economics (University Paris Pantheon Sorbonne, 1996), is the founding president of the Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (iriv). She is responsible for its studies and training programmes. She edits publications and websites, including iriv's electronic review Les rives de l'iriv and iriv's newsletter De Paris aux autres mondes. The pilot EU project she initiated and directed in seven EU countries (2003-2006), Assessing a Voluntary Eperience (VAEB), was awarded in Helsinki in 2006 for excellent practice in addressing the priorities of the Copenhagen Process. The project Success at School through Volunteering (SAS, 2012-2014), which she initiated with the University of Northampton across six EU countries was the touchstone for a monthly activity for youngsters implemented in Esonne since 2013. She has lectured at various universities in Europe (France, Austria, UK…) and has been a member of board of associations and scientific committees (France and Switzerland) since 2007.

Jagiellonian University (www.uj.edu.pl) has a student population of over 45,000, studying a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in 15 Faculties and 46 Institutes. JU is the second largest centre of higher education in Poland. In total it offers undergraduate, master, doctoral and postgraduate programmes in 128 disciplines. The Faculty Management and Social Communication, Institute of Public Affairs has been acknowledged nationally as a leading provider of training and development in public organisations. Responsible for that area is the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). It runs several study programmes in public management and social policy studies. It has over 3000 students. Within public management programmes it offers specific programmes focused on different public organisations. The Educational management programme offered within the IPA by the Department of Educational Management (DEM) is one of the most recognised in Poland. The IPA DEM works collaboratively with schools, educational authorities on a local level and a number of government and private agencies involved in education. The IPA has a well-resourced research environment built in 2006-2008 which seeks to both stimulate research and to ensure quality through the careful evaluation of projects. Educational research is an area of strength which is developing further in scale and quality.

Agnieszka Borek, sociologist evaluator, expert and coach in the programme for improving pedagogical supervision in Poland. Author and co-author of many evaluations in education. Works in "Era of Evaluation" – the partnership of Jagiellonian University in Cracow and Centre for Educational Development in Warsaw in the project "Boosting Effectiveness of Pedagogical Supervision System and School Quality Assessment Programme". Her research interests teaching and learning, teachers' attitudes, schools' evaluation and self-evaluation, and teachers' professional development. She is a certified educator. Since 2011, she has been a director of the educational project for 23,000 Polish teachers and principals focused on the whole school development, exploring issues of school self-evaluation, authentic teaching and learning processes and data based decision making. She has been a coordinator of a project on transformation of schools' inspection system for schools and other educational institutions in Poland (funded within the European Social Fund).

Laura Rabiej graduated in Management of Education in Jagiellonian University. Currently she is a PhD student at the same university. She works in the Institute for Public Affairs in the Faculty of Management and Social Communication and in Competency Development Office at the Centre for Academic Support of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. She is involved in the implementation of several projects in the field of education and evaluation. She is author and co-author of several articles. Her research interests are focused on the quality of teaching and learning, learning organisation and schools' evaluation. She worked in project "Boosting Effectiveness of Pedagogical Supervision

System and School Quality Assessment Programme" on transforming inspection system for schools and other educational institutions in Poland (funded by the European Social Fund). At that time, she was a member of the methodological team which prepared procedures, methods and tools for school evaluation.

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU, www.zrc-sazu.si) is the leading Slovenian research centre in humanities and a cutting-edge academic institution in Central, Eastern, and South-eastern Europe. It has a multidisciplinary character; in addition to the humanities, its spheres of research cover the natural and social sciences. The research network of ZRC SAZU consists of researchers working at eighteen institutes. Researchers conduct their studies at three regional research stations, which connect the research network across Slovenia. ZRC SAZU's competences include a scientific, analytical, and synthetic multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach, extensive knowledge and experience connected with compiling databases, designing thematic maps and graphic material, and preparing various publications. Research teams of the ZRC SAZU consist of researchers and technical and specialist advisers with a high level of responsibility that maintain strong and diverse contacts with the international research community. ZRC SAZU has its own publishing house, bookstore, and audio-visual laboratory; it houses the Geographical Museum, and boasts numerous collections. Among its rich publishing activity, five research journals listed in the Thomson Reuters indices are especially noteworthy. ZRC SAZU offers several undergraduate and graduate academic programmes: The Comparative Study of Ideas and Cultures, Karst Studies, the EU Master's Programme in Migration and Intercultural Relations (Erasmus Mundus status), and Cultural History.

Mojca Kovačič, PhD, is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Ethnomusicology of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. She is a professor of music with experience in teaching music in secondary school. Her interest mainly cover research into folk music as well as soundscape studies in connection to urban religious sounds and street music. She conducts out music workshops for youngsters. She is a professional consultant for Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia, and the national representative for the International Council for Traditional Music. Lately, she has been involved in coordination of three Erasmus+ projects related to volunteering among youngsters and development of their competences. She is skilled in project administration and organisation of scientific meetings.

Dan Podjed, PhD, is a Research Fellow at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and an Assistant Professor for Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Ljubljana. He is a convenor of the Applied Anthropology Network of the European Association of Social

Anthropologists (EASA) and initiator of the international symposium Why the World Needs Anthropologists, annually organised since 2013. In 2011, he was awarded by the Slovenian Research Agency for his publications on nature conservation volunteering in Slovenia and received an award in 2008 for exceptional achievements from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts. His current research interests include volunteering and altruism, sustainable lifestyle, human-technology interactions, and organisational cultures.

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