



**Report from mapping
of the educational situation
in the Central and Eastern
European region with
focus on service-learning**



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Introduction

Service-learning enables children, teenagers and young adults to put into action what they have learned in order to contribute to local and global development. Active involvement in service-learning allows students to generate new knowledge, research on new themes and develop life and work skills, as well as strengthen civic participation. Service-learning experiences have a direct influence on the formation of children and youth and their values. It increases their interest in environmental issues and in the societies in which they live, and it promotes active civic duties. It is a valuable tool for personal development of children and youth and their social participation. It provides them with the space for self-realization and the opportunity to discover their own potential through specific ideas and projects, combined with useful feedback and the evaluation of their activities. Service-learning is an experiential form of search for oneself through activities one truly enjoys and can dedicate to. It is a tool to acquire and develop skills that can contribute to increased employability of young people and the development of their competitiveness. Simultaneously, service-learning meets current societal needs and brings benefits to all the parties involved. It contributes to global and local development and improves the quality of education in institutions of all levels.

In 2015 **CLAYSS** (Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario) was invoked by a generous donor in Central and Eastern Europe to evaluate the relevance of this topic in such region. Much interest was found, and since April 2016 to present, CLAYSS has been working with local partners in the region offering different types of activities: online courses directed to school teachers, university professors and youth workers / social educators, the development of the Regional Service-Learning Week in different cities around the region, translation and cultural adaptation of bibliography, Solidarity Universities Support Program, participation of professionals from the region in the International Service-Learning Week in Buenos Aires, open conferences in the region as well as the facilitation toward the construction of a *Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network*.


The purpose of this mapping is to learn about the development of service-learning in Central and Eastern Europe (to what extent the region knows / has heard about this innovative pedagogical approach and in what levels and ways it implements it), understand difficulties of and challenges for SL implementation in CEE, as well as identify key actors already working in the field and the types of SL-related work they are doing. We expect this material to serve as a guide in future endeavors to be undertaken regionally.

CEE region

Several definitions of CEE region can be found in literature. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) is an OECD term for the group of countries comprising Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In the report we also included Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (partially recognized territory).

The CEE countries are further subdivided by their accession status to the European Union (EU): the eight first-wave accession countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004 (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia), the two second-wave accession countries that joined on 1 January 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) and the third-wave accession countries that joined on 1 July 2013 (Croatia). Other countries in CEE region are not part of the European union.

There are very diverse countries in the CEE region. On the one hand, they share some common historical contexts, such as the history of communism and socialism, and the process of transformation to democracy, on the other hand, they have their own distinctive roots in the transformation process. It has an impact on their socio-economic functioning at the present time. In the CEE region, we find countries that



are part of the European Union and who achieve economic development and a standard of living of the developed countries of the world, as well as countries with a lower standard of living and significant problems and challenges in their political, economic and social development. Since the 1990s all CEE countries are undergoing different kinds of reforms - political and economic, but there are also many cultural and social transformations related to wider societal changes such as globalization, migration or modernization. These processes are also expressed in standard shapes and forms in these countries even though the rise of such changes is being witnessed later when compared to Western European countries. These changes are also reflected in the educational systems and in the form of solidarity in these countries, which also has an impact on the development of service-learning strategy as a community oriented form of pedagogy.

Methodology of report

The primary source of data for creating the report was the answers to the questionnaires of participants of the on-line service-learning courses conducted in the CEE region between 2016 and 2018 by CLAYSS and from semi-structured interviews with local experts on the issue. These reports and interviews were subsequently analysed by members of the team from Matej Bel University, who are authors of this report, and summarized. We also used the special resources (publications, webpages, reports from projects...) available for service-learning in CEE region for further supplementation.

The report was requested by CLAYSS within this project and prepared by teams of experts from Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) who are devoted to developing this service-learning strategy in and outside the university environment. In addition to the resources provided from individual countries, the report is also based on the service-learning related experience of the authors. At the same time, the report represents one of the views on the situation of service-learning in the CEE region. We realise that many topics related to service-learning, actors and projects have not been researched, especially due to limited resources and language barriers. Many sources documenting the service-learning activities are only available in specific national languages. Despite these constraints, we believe that the report provides an insight into the current state of development of the service-learning strategy in the CEE region and its potential for future development.

As part of the preparation of the report, we managed to process reports for the following CEE countries: Slovakia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Montenegro, Serbia, Czech Republic, Macedonia and Albania. For other countries, we have been unable to comprehensively process reports, but we present information on them from other sources.

1. Service-Learning. Key features and definition

The literature in the field indicates several basic theoretical definitions of service-learning, as well as numerous paradigms and perspectives in which this strategy is viewed (see Butin, 2010; Moore-Lin Lan et al., 2009). In the last 20 years, more than 200 new definitions of service-learning have been published, in which service-learning is understood as an experience, a pedagogical concept, a philosophical concept, social movement etc.

Service-learning is often known in the literature as a pedagogy that combines a service to the community with learning opportunities offered to the involved students (Heffernan, 2001, Copaci & Rusu, 2016). Service-learning is generally described as a “balanced approach to experiential education” that can “ensure equal focus on both the service provided to the community and the learning that is occurring” (Furco, 1996, apud Copaci & Rusu, 2016). In other words, service-learning is perceived as a method by which students can learn and develop social and professional competencies through active participation in community-oriented experiences that are connected to their academic curricula and provide them with reflective opportunities (Furco, 2011). From this strategy application in the process of education teachers expect not only the development of professional competencies but also changes in the students’ “civic characteristics” which determine the citizens’ involvement not only during but also after performing service-learning projects.

Nowadays, there is a consensus among academics and experts in the field that service-learning has three key characteristics: 1) a focus on efficiently and effectively addressing needs with a community, and not just for the community; 2) active student involvement in all stages from planning to assessment; 3) intentionally linked to learning content (curricular learning, reflection, development of skills for citizenship and work, research) (Regina, 2017). Service-learning works with real student experiences and involves metacognitive learning when the student is aware of how he learned, what he learned, what helped him learn, how he can use it in practice, and what he needs to learn further. It is understood as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with education and reflection. The community service is incorporated into the curriculum of various academic subjects and study programs. There are several SL models in practice. It can be implemented within one subject or it can combine several subjects or teachers to engage in interdisciplinary projects. Subjects in which the service-learning is applied may also be selective. Service-learning allows students to earn credits for the learning outcomes that take place through active community engagement and real-life solutions in practice. The process of learning is supported by self-reflection led by the teacher as a necessary part of experiential learning. The teacher plays the role of tutor or mentor in this process. SL requires the cooperation of students, teachers and communities.

When operating with a service-learning concept, it is suggested that a distinction is made between community service, volunteerism, field education and service-learning (Fiske, 2001; Furco & Holland, 2005, Lipčáková & Matulayová, 2012). Thus, service-learning distinguishes itself from other types of community-oriented activities by its connection with the curriculum content, aiming to enrich the learning process by a better understanding of course content and a broader appreciation of the discipline, to promote the civic responsibility of the students and to strengthen communities (Fiske, 2001; Bringle and Hatcher, 1996; Rusu, Bencic & Hodor, 2014). According to Lipčáková and Matulayová (2012), the distinction may be observed in the respective goals, i.e. focus, and temporal viewpoint of each. Volunteerism is generally concerned with providing a service. Internship programs focus more on students and on obtaining and applying the specific competencies necessary to succeed in a given profession. Service-learning seeks to effectively merge the beneficial aspects

of volunteerism with the practitioner model of a traditional internship. The primary distinction between the service-based education (service-learning) experience and that of a professional internship program may be found in the degree of reciprocity between student and organization or community and development of the students' civic engagement.

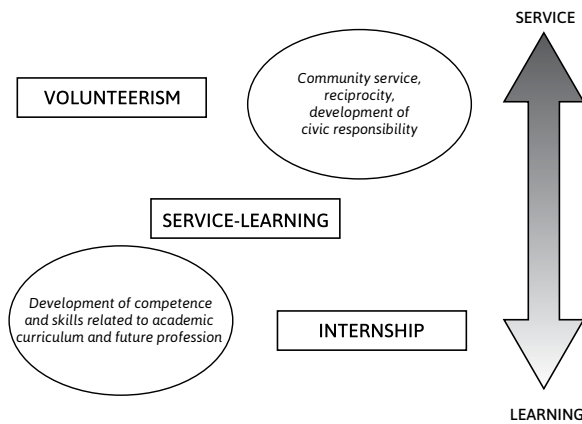


Figure 1 . Distinction between service-learning and other forms of students participation and learning. SOURCE: self-processing

However, literature and international forums sometimes perceive service-learning as a model or a form of volunteerism. Most notably, the credits or points gained by a student for service-learning activities are not linked to the service itself, i.e. the points are not given for the volunteer activity itself but for what the student has learned – for learning outcomes. The “award” is thus linked to the learning process and not to the service process.

In order to distinguish between service-learning practices and other community engagement activities developed in educational environments, CLAYSS uses the “Service-learning quadrants” tool, originally developed by the Stanford University, and adapted to the Argentine experience (cf. Giorgetti, 2007; Service-Learning Center, 1996; Tapia, 2000:28; Tapia, 2006: 26). The vertical axis of the chart refers to the higher or lower quality of solidarity service offered to the community, whereas the horizontal axis indicates the higher or lower level of integration of formal and systematic academic learning with the service activity carried out.

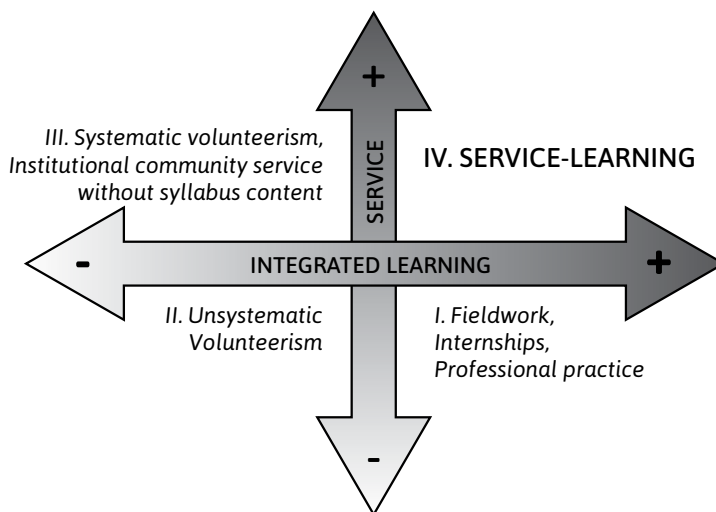


Figure 2 . The conceptual SL quadrant model.

Source: Regina, 2017 adapted by Tapia, 2006 based on the model elaborated by the Service-Learning 2000 Center, Stanford University, California, 1996).

The goals of service-learning are defined in several areas:

- to promote students' learning processes by correlating theoretical concepts with experiences, and thinking with action;
- to identify and address needs of the community through direct, meaningful and necessary services;
- to give students the opportunity to help others, and to introduce students to a helping capacity in a relationship;
- to help students see the connection between academic courses and the real world;
- to increase self-respect and self-confidence in the students;
- to aid in fostering cooperation between students, schools and the community;
- to give students the opportunity to do important and necessary work;
- to promote citizenship and civic skills;
- to help organizations provide their clients with better service;
- to expose students to social shortcomings and injustice, and to encourage them to address them;
- to develop a richer context of learning;
- to gain multicultural experience;
- to prepare students better for their future professions;
- to give students a greater responsibility for their learning;
- to have an impact on local needs and see themselves as active actors who may intervene in the resolution of social problems (Cooper, 2005).

Successfully implemented service-learning activities can greatly enhance the learning experience of students, schools and communities. However, the concept of managing this teaching and learning strategy must consider the fact that the objectives of the service and the learning objectives are coherently linked to the realization of the activity, and at the same time there must be a visible change in all actors engaged.

The use of service-learning helps students achieve better educational outcomes (knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes), develops their civic responsibility and engagement, as well as encourages their personal growth and develops the skills needed for everyday life. Service-learning also helps to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, to teach students to identify and solve problems, develop intercultural skills, more respect for diversity, self-awareness, communication skills, collaboration skills, and much more.

The use of service-learning develops engagement with other organizations in the **community**, promotes civic participation, has the potential to eliminate gender stereotypes, shows new perspectives, extends the potential for developing volunteering, provides scope for real-world information on community needs, and improves the efficiency, quality and scale of services in the community.

The use of service-learning in schools encourages experiential teaching methods, mutual learning and discussion between teachers and students, engages students with different learning styles, promotes a positive atmosphere at the educational institution, makes the educational institution more attractive, leads to scientific development, research implementation, and provides an opportunity to get acquainted with community issues at both a professional and a human level, increases the ability of the educational institution to respond to society's needs, increases the competitiveness of the school, creates opportunities for cooperation at national and international levels, improves collaboration between the students themselves, the school/university and the community and other organizations.



2. Education, Civic Society and Civic Engagement in CEE Region

Service-learning is a pedagogical strategy that links education and community engagement. Therefore, the context and possibilities for its development in the CEE region need to address the educational systems on the one hand and the form of civic society, solidarity and civic engagement on the other. Individual studies could be written on these two areas, as the CEE region itself represents very diverse countries with specific histories and contemporary characteristics. Therefore, we will attempt to summarise some of the key features in the report, which, of course, may not always be typical of each country or may not all be present in each given country.

2.1. Educational system, civic society, civic engagement and solidarity in CEE region – historical connections

Educational systems, as well as civic society and civic engagement itself in CEE region, were influenced by socialism and communism. As states Burjan (2011) the educational systems were based on egalitarian principles, collective education and strong centralization. During socialism, the state has absolute monopole in education. There were only state schools, in maximum level unified. The State made directive decisions about the aims and content of education. There were no other considerable alternatives. There was also no space for free decisions of parents about the educational road of children. There was no space for sharing civic opinions or dissatisfaction with educational system. The State was successful in convincing citizens that education had to be State controlled and that only the State is competent and eligible to provide this “product” to children and youth. This attitude is still prevailing in many countries.

In the publication *“Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Opportunities”* (2017) authors identified in CEE region 4 country groups which have experienced similar historical events that have encouraged or constrained the emergence of civil society organization.

As stated by Meyer, Moder, Neumayr, Traxler and Vandor (2017) today, more than 25 years after the collapse of communist regimes in CEE, the countries of the region can no longer be treated as “statist” or “in transition”. Though they are all post-communist countries and their civil society sectors have experienced repressive regimes, different events have influenced them in the recent past. Among them are the Yugoslav Wars, accession to the European Union, ethnic conflicts, right-wing governments that have come into power, and the rising numbers of refugees in 2015. These events have a formative influence on many aspects of society.

Based on the publication *“Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Opportunities”* (2017) we will briefly present some most important features which are relevant to our report and topic. These four country groups are:

1. Visegrad group: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
2. Croatia and Slovenia
3. Bulgaria and Romania
4. Non-EU Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia

Visegrad group: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia

Social changes in the countries of this group have many commonalities. Under communist rule (1945-1989), the regimes of all four countries become gradually less restrictive, especially in the last decades. Many actors of civil society operated by underground (such as independent underground Christian movement, the environment movement and intellectuals) and played an important role in the change of the system (e.g. the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia).

Frič and Pospíšilová (2011) analysed the patterns of volunteering in the period of socialism in Czech republic, and they can be applied to all Visegrad countries. The story of volunteering in socialism was not only a story of discontinuity but also of continuity. They identify three patterns of volunteering, which are seen as a continuum. The first formula is the socialist form of volunteering, which was understood as the basis of a socialist way of life, which is generously supported by the state, ideologized. Voluntary work was seen as a proof of the legitimacy of the regime. The second is a pragmatic formula with varying degrees of free choice or compulsion, altruism and egoism. Volunteering in this formula was motivated by careerism, fear of sanctions, reciprocity, but also an escape into a social microworld (e.g., activities in small informal organizations focusing on the area of leisure time). The third formula is labelled dissident. Within this area, volunteer activities were provided by church and dissident organizations. The motivation for participation was faith in the ideals of civil society, democracy and religious belief¹.

The political changes of 1989 were followed by several legislative modifications regarding civic society and civic engagement as well as the boom of non-governmental organizations, another common feature of Visegrad countries in their early accession to the European Union in 2004. As a part of the pre-accession process, legal regulations that were geared toward fostering civil development were adopted. In this group, the relationship between civil society and the government has been challenged by several changes in government since 1989. While some governments have tried to strengthen the role of the state and were very skeptical toward civil society, others aimed to open the state to the citizens and to introduce participatory mechanisms into policymaking. This volatile relationship made it difficult for civil society to become an important partner in policy domains and to gain access to government funding. Most recently, authoritarian right-wing parties have come into the government in Hungary (in 2010) and Poland (2015) and a neo-Nazi political party massively increased its votes in parliamentary election in Slovakia (in 2016). In Hungary, this resulted in repression and sanctions against CSOs, including defamation of international CSOs and foundations. Within the exception of the Czech Republic, the countries of Visegrad group have witnessed an increasing value polarization in the last few years.

Croatia and Slovenia

Similar to countries of the Visegrad group, Croatia and Slovenia already experiences a process of liberalization under the one-party system in the last decades of communist rule; this permitted the formation of numerous CSOs. As early as 1986, Slovenia issued a new law on the freedom of associations, which contributed to the growth of the sector and civic engagement. The Yugoslav Wars slowed the development of civil society. At the beginning of the 1990s, the development of CSOs was predominantly advanced through international humanitarian aid. While this kind of support definitely facilitated the development of civil society, it was also criticized for its

1 In the case of a socialist and pragmatic formula, it is possible in our opinion to argue whether it was really about volunteering, since engaging in "voluntary activities" often did not meet one of the basic prerequisites of volunteering which is free choice. For a certain part of the population, it could indeed be an expression of their constructive enthusiasm in terms of the development of the socialist society, but a large part of the population participated in the action because they had no choice.

program not being embedded to the local context. Meanwhile both countries have become member states: Slovenia in 2004, Croatia in 2003. In the process of accession in the EU, their policies become more favorable to the development of civil society and thus increased visibility and importance of civic engagement.

Bulgaria and Romania

Bulgaria and Romania entered EU in 2007. The period leading to accession to the EU was characterized by massive support for civil society in the form of financial support as well as institutional and capacity building. This development increased the power of civil society. During this period numerous legal regulations facilitating civil society activities also came into force. These regulations contributed to a considerable increase in the number of CSOs in both countries. After their accession to the EU, however, Bulgaria and Romania saw dramatic reduction in the technical support from foreign donors and they were not able to sufficiently use money from EU funds for civil society development. The Yugoslav Wars did not affect civil society in Bulgaria and Romania directly, as neither country was involved in conflicts. In 2013, the increasing number of refugees from the Middle East gave rise to many grassroots initiatives active in this field in Bulgaria. In 2015, however, nationalist CSOs emerged as a countermovement and aimed to protect the country's borders from illegal immigration.

Non-EU Countries

Although countries in this group were under communist rule, several countries in this group underwent a process of liberalization toward civil society in the 1980s. The most influential events for most countries in this group were Yugoslav Wars. They have had dramatic impact on the development of civil society, causing suffering, division and destruction of long-established institutions. The post-war years were characterized by government changes, ongoing minority and ethnic conflicts. Several of the newly formed independent states underwent repeat changes in government, including center-right movement that refused to collaborate with CSOs. In some countries, however, these suppressive policies contributed to strengthen civil society. Along with the war and unstable political situation, massive international support and funding for capacity building flowed into the region. The numerous legal changes aimed at strengthening civil society – which could be observed in other country groups – have been largely absent in this group. An exception is the Republic of Moldova, where the development of civil society became national priority after 2008.

The level of civic engagement in Central and Eastern European countries still cannot compare to the one that has been reached in countries with a developed culture of engagement in resolving local problems. This is due to the above mentioned historical experience, as well as to other problems and needs identified in the analysis **Volunteering infrastructure in Europe** prepared by European Volunteering Centre such as: the need to actively motivate people to get involved in civic and voluntary activities, the need to educate about volunteering, the need of education, training and capacity building in the field of volunteering and civic engagement etc.

The specific meaning of solidarity in CEE region is connected with the above mentioned differences. Solidarity in the context of practical community service carries a voluntary attribute, not only to indicate that a person participates in it on his or her own will but also to express a certain contradiction to compulsory solidarity. Historically, voluntary solidarity was the precursor to that of a compulsory nature, but the powerful social state during the period of communism and consequently to the social-democratic direction of governments after 1989 led to its weakening. Compulsory or forced solidarity and contributions to the social system began to be seen by people as fulfilling their obligations towards others, in order to

fulfill reciprocity and comradeship. This is evidenced by research findings on the perception of volunteering among people in some countries. For example, there is a strong dominance in Slovakia that volunteers would not be needed if the state fulfilled its obligations. In 1998, this view was held by 55% of respondents (Woleková, 2002) and by 74% in 2003 (Bútorová, 2004). This view is upheld even in the young generation. In the research conducted in 2017 (Brozmanová Gregorová, Siekelová, Šolcová, 2018) between young people aged 15 to 30, up to 54 percent of respondents agreed with this view. As Bútorová (2004) states, this way of thinking is based on the idea that, under ideal conditions, the hand of the caregiving state should “reach out” to every situation in the life of the community, whether it is an emergency situation or development opportunities. People with such a statist approach do not perceive volunteering as an irreplaceable segment in the life of society. The growth of forced solidarity has, on the one hand, positive consequences in that the satisfaction of the basic needs of the population is guaranteed by the state, which increases the sense of social security, on the other hand it risks the loss of activity of individuals and the limitation of voluntary solidarity, as is evident also in the example of Slovakia. Forced solidarity essentially blocks the possibility of expressing the freedom of action to the benefit of someone else because this role is undertaken by the state and leaves no room for that freedom.

2.2. Strategies and policies in education, youth and civic engagement at a European level

The educational system and civic engagement in CEE region are influenced not only by country specific historical, political, economic and social situation, but also by the policy on the European level. The directions set up by the European institution can play an important role in future service-learning development in CEE region. EU countries are responsible for their own education and training systems, but the EU helps them set joint goals and share good practices. We will mention some important documents at a EU level in education, youth and civic engagement.

The **Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth** put forward by the European Commission emphasizes how the EU may improve its competitiveness and productivity during the period up to 2020. An **Agenda for new skills and jobs** is one of the seven flagship initiatives of this strategy: its goals include ‘equipping people with the right skills for the jobs of today and tomorrow’ and the initiative is designed to help the EU achieve its employment target whereby it is hoped that 75 % of the working-age population (20-64 years) will be in employment by 2020.

One of the main means that may be used to improve productivity and competitiveness is investing in human capital (one aspect of which is investment in education and training). At the same time, the Agenda for new skills and jobs can also contribute towards two additional headline targets that form part of the Europe 2020 strategy, namely to reduce the early-leavers from education and training rate to below 10 % and to increase the proportion of people aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education to at least 40 %.

Political cooperation within the EU was strengthened through the education and training 2010 work programme which integrated previous actions in the fields of education and training. The follow-up to this programme, the **Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training** (later known as ET 2020), was adopted by the Council in May 2009.

It sets out four strategic objectives for education and training in the EU:

- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;
- promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship; and
- enhancing creativity and innovation (including entrepreneurship) at all levels of education and training.

In 2014, recent progress was assessed and priorities reviewed: in November 2015 the Council adopted a set of six new priorities for the period 2016-2020 based on a **joint report** (2015/C 417/04) from the European Commission and the EU Member States. The priority areas for further work towards 2020 include:

- relevant and high-quality knowledge, skills and competences developed throughout lifelong learning, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, innovation, active citizenship and well-being;
- inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences;
- open and innovative education and training, including by fully embracing the digital era;
- strong support for teachers, trainers, school leaders and other educational staff;
- transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning and labour mobility;
- sustainable investment, quality and efficiency of education and training systems.

In November 2012, the European Commission presented **Rethinking education: investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes** (COM(2012) 669 final), an initiative to encourage EU Member States to ensure that young people develop the skills and competences needed by the labour market. This Communication was developed in the face of increased competition from workers outside of the EU and increased youth unemployment within the EU, alongside sluggish economic performance. The Communication pays particular attention to combatting youth unemployment:

- developing world-class vocational education and training to raise the quality of vocational skills;
- promoting work-based learning including quality traineeships, apprenticeships and dual learning models to help the transition from learning to work;
- promoting partnerships between public and private institutions (to ensure appropriate curricula and skills provision);
- promoting mobility through the Erasmus+ programme (see below for more details).

On 19 March 2015, the European Economic and Social Committee, acting under Rule 29(2) of its Rules of Procedure, decided to draw up an own-initiative opinion on **“Engaged universities shaping Europe”**. They advocate explicitly for the first time for civic university in EU policy documents.

In May 2017, the European Commission adopted a Communication (COM(2017) 247 final) on a **renewed EU agenda for higher education**, focusing on four priority activities:

- tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development;
- building inclusive and connected higher education systems;
- ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation;
- supporting effective and efficient higher education systems.

Two policy processes are worth mentioning within the context of tertiary education and vocational training: the **Bologna process** put in motion a series of reforms to make European higher education more compatible, comparable, competitive and attractive for students, while the **Copenhagen process** was aimed at promoting and developing vocational education and training. The main objectives of the Bologna process are:

- the introduction of a three-cycle degree system (bachelor, master and doctorate);
- quality assurance; and
- recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

The **EU's programme for education, training, youth and sport**, referred to as **Erasmus+**, was adopted in December 2013. This programme covers the period 2014-2020 and has an overall budget of EUR 14.7 billion. With respect to education and training, the programme supports three main types of actions:

- learning opportunities and mobility for individuals, both within the EU and beyond, for example through study and training, traineeships, and teaching and professional development;
- institutional cooperation — for innovation and the exchange of good practices — between educational institutions, youth organisations, businesses, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- support for policy reform — designed to promote the active participation of young people in democratic life.

In May 2018, the European Commission adopted proposals for the **Erasmus programme for 2021-2027**, involving a doubling of the budget to EUR 30 billion which is expected should enable 12 million people to participate in the programme.

The **EU Youth Strategy** promotes equal opportunities in education and employment for young people and encourages them to play an active part in society. It fosters youth participation in democratic life; it also supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society. The strategy includes 11 goals, which reflect the views of European youth and represent the vision of those active in the EU Youth Dialogue:

- Connecting EU with Youth
- Equality of All Genders
- Inclusive Societies
- Information & Constructive Dialogue
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Moving Rural Youth Forward
- Quality Employment for All
- Quality Learning
- Space and Participation for All
- Sustainable Green Europe
- Youth Organisations & European Programmes

The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people by mobilising EU level policy instruments as well as actions at national, regional and local level by all stakeholders.

The European Solidarity Corps is the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. The European Solidarity Corps brings together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges. It offers an

inspiring and empowering experience for young people who want to help, learn and develop.

European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion (2007/2149(INI)) calls on the Commission, the Member States and regional and local authorities to promote volunteering through education at all levels, creating opportunities for voluntary activity at an early stage in the education system so that it is seen as normal contribution to community life and to continue to promote such activity as students grow older, to facilitate 'service-learning' where students work with voluntary or community groups in partnership as part of their diploma or degree course, to encourage links between the voluntary sector and the education sector at all levels and to promote volunteering and recognise learning in volunteering as part of lifelong learning.

2.3. Structure of educational systems in CEE region²

Early childhood education programmes (ISCED level 0) are typically designed with a holistic approach to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and introduce young children to organised instruction outside of the family context. These programmes have an intentional education component and aim to develop socio-emotional skills necessary for participation in school and society. They also develop some of the skills needed for academic readiness and prepare children for entry into primary education. These programmes target children below the age of entry into primary education.

Early childhood educational development (ISCED level 01) has educational content designed for younger children (in the age range of 0 to 2 years), whilst pre-primary education (ISCED level 02) is designed for children from the age of 3 years up to the start of primary education (ISCED level 1). Age is generally the sole criterion for admission to compulsory primary education, which starts when children reach six years of age in most of the CEE countries. Some countries (for example Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Poland) have a compulsory starting age of seven. Primary education typically lasts six years, although its duration can range between four and seven years; as a result, it typically lasts until a child is 10 to 12 years old.

Primary education programmes are typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (in other words literacy and numeracy) and to establish a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge, personal and social development, in preparation for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little, if any, specialisation.

Pupils enter **lower secondary education** (ISCED level 2) typically between the ages of 10 and 13 (age 12 being the most common) and they typically enter **upper secondary education** (ISCED level 3) between the ages of 14 and 16.

² Prepared according to the Education and training in the EU - facts and figures and reports and structured by the international standard classification of education (ISCED) is the basis for international education statistics, describing different levels of education; it was first developed in 1976 by UNESCO and revised in 1997 and again in 2011. ISCED 2011 distinguishes nine levels of education: early childhood education (level 0), with level 01 for early childhood development and level 02 for pre-primary education); primary education (level 1); lower secondary education (level 2); upper secondary education (level 3); post-secondary non-tertiary education (level 4); short-cycle tertiary education (level 5); bachelor's or equivalent (level 6); master's or equivalent (level 7); doctoral or equivalent (level 8).

In general, compulsory education is completed at the end of lower secondary education, although in some countries it continues into upper secondary education and in some it is still part of the primary system. As its name suggests, post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED level 4) starts after the completion of upper secondary education.

Tertiary education — provided by universities and other higher education institutions — is the level of education following secondary schooling. It is seen to play an essential role in society, by fostering innovation, increasing economic development and growth, and improving more generally the well-being of citizens. In the coming years, many commentators predict that there will be increased demand for highly skilled people; indeed, skills gaps already exist in some EU Member States. Driven by digital technology, jobs are becoming more flexible and complex. This has resulted in a growing number of employers seeking staff with the necessary capacities to manage complex information, think autonomously, be creative, use resources in a smart and efficient manner, as well as communicate effectively. A relatively large number of students in tertiary education are internationally mobile and study abroad. Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral levels of tertiary education are found in all CEE States, while short-cycle tertiary education, which is typically practically-based and occupationally-specific to prepare students for the labour market, is not part of the education system in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, nor in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Serbia. It is also quite uncommon in several others, for example the Czech Republic, Croatia and Poland.

2.4. Challenges in educational systems in CEE region

School helps young people acquire basic life skills and competences that are necessary for their personal development. The quality of a pupil's school experience affects not only their development, but also their place in society, level of educational attainment, and employment opportunities. There are many challenges in educational systems in CEE countries. They are analyzed for example in the book „The Education Systems of Europe. Second Edition“ (Hörner, Döbert, Reuter, Kopp (eds), 2015). These challenges can influence also future development of service-learning in this region. We tried to separate them in few areas, but as we mentioned previously, they can be specific for concrete countries. Although significant results have been achieved in the field of education in CEE region in the last 20 years, it is difficult to predict further development in this sector, since previous experience indicates in many countries that the success in implementing reform efforts is strictly dependent on social, political, and economic changes, and these were not continually beneficial.

General challenges (Hörner, Döbert, Reuter, Kopp (eds), 2015):

- Mixture of homogenization on the one hand and a vehement diversification of educational models, school-based profiles and organizations, performance differences between schools, and educational behavior of the various social classes on the other.
- Democratization and increased pluralism of education;
- High level of globalization and Europeanization versus the need to protect the own language and culture;
- Standardization and completeness of predetermined learning outcomes versus uniqueness, innovation, and creativity;
- Behaviorist approach versus social constructivist approach
- The education system's focus on economic dynamics versus the marginalization of culture and social sphere;
- Cooperation versus competition in education;

- Internal versus external learning motivation;
- Education as an instrument versus education as a value in itself
- Develop a governance and management system in the field of education;
- The transition to a learning educational institution instead from a teacher-centric one needs further improvement in terms of management and pedagogical processes at all levels, and new programs have been introduced for teachers' and educators' further professional development;
- Restructuring higher education;
- Develop the evaluation system in education, especially the accreditation system and quality control of educational programs and institutions;
- Development of a culture of professional responsibility among all stakeholders of the education system and educational activities;
- Harmonization of different innovations which are being introduced in practice;
- Development and use of educational statistics and information system in the field of education.
- There is currently an ongoing public discussion on how better to motivate young people for technical schools. These schools are facing a huge shortage of students.
- Weak connection between the university and the community and between the university and the labor market.
- Efforts to have education policy decisions founded in empirical studies.
- The state policy which does not support the third mission of universities.

School infrastructure:

- Insufficient capacity of schools and universities;
- Inadequate buildings and technical equipment;
- Decentralization of the management and financing of the school system;
- Securing free school transport;
- Missing free textbooks for all pupils;
- Missing free accommodation in hostels for students;

School curriculum:

- Language courses for young children (in particular for children from immigrant families)
- Implementation of education standards
- Reconsideration of basic educational objectives and aims;
- Adjusting educational contents and qualifications to the requirements of the labor market;
- Reconsideration of approaches to teaching and learning processes, especially with regard to the acquisition of transferable skills and knowledge on the one hand and the support of gifted children on the other
- The revision of existing curricula;
- Experts are discussing new educational methods across all levels of the school system. Some groups of pupils are also working on projects aimed at reviewing and modernizing the curriculum. The focus is on an integrative and flexible curriculum, on interactive lessons with a problem-solving approach to learning, etc.
- The education system is still relying on the traditional way of teaching, more on theoretical rather than practical. It is far from the norm in the developed countries, where students acquire the knowledge through practical education.
- Theoretical knowledge without skills.

Education of groups with special needs:

- Education and training of physically disabled and mentally challenged children is not well developed;
- A particular challenge for the education system is the situation regarding the Roma population;
- Improvements in education for rural regions and for marginalized groups such as Roma and women;

School results:

- Inadequate performance of schools and pupils in international comparisons;
- High drop-out rate from compulsory schooling;
- Educational inequality still occurs in rural areas;

Teaching profession:

The quality of education may be linked to teaching standards, which in turn are related to the demands placed upon teachers, the training they receive, the roles they are asked to fill and the resources that are made available for them to carry out their tasks. Statistics already show that the teaching profession is becoming less and less attractive in almost all countries in CEE region. Possible underlying factors identified in several countries are:

- the longer duration of teacher training,
- the very long period of temporary appointment without a guarantee of nomination,
- the lower salaries (compared to the private sector),
- the lack of social esteem attached to the teaching profession,
- low prestige of teacher's profession.

The poor pay of the teachers, a fact that has a negative effect on teachers' motivation and slows down the impetus of the planned reform. Additional work, such as developing the curriculum, continues to be a problem since the teachers are forced to have several different sources of income to survive.

3. Current state of Service-Learning in CEE Region

Current state of service-learning development varies from country to country, but the analysed reports and the literature indicate that the service-learning development is in its early stage. There are countries, in which the term service-learning is completely new and we could not find any practice or initiative based on service-learning (which does not necessarily mean that it does not exist), countries in which some schools and / or universities are developing projects based on service-learning principles, mostly in cooperation with NGO's, and countries in which service-learning started to be recognized by key stakeholders in the educational community and in the field of volunteering.

Brozmanová Gregorová, Kurpielová, Šolcová, Bielešová (2013) identified 4 models of volunteering or civic engagement in connection with formal education in Slovakia. According to the analyzed report they can be identified also in other CEE countries. The models differ in the extent to which the educational institution and its teachers are involved, in the system of organization or coordination of voluntary activities of students, and also in the extent to which the volunteering is connected with the educational process of the school.

The first model is individual volunteering. It is the volunteering of young people developed by independent volunteer centers or organizations. In this case, the school is not directly involved in the organization of volunteer activities. The connection between the participation of pupils in volunteer activities and the process of their education in the school environment is usually also not analyzed. Volunteering is performed on an individual basis. Pupils or students are addressed as potential volunteers by various organizations in different ways. They can engage in one-time but also regular volunteer activities. They help with the organization of events, administrative work as well as direct work with clients. Volunteers sign a volunteering contract and based on the nature of the activity, they are trained or provided with support for the implementation of a volunteer activity. The quality of work with young volunteers within organizations can vary greatly. In ideal cases, the organization has a designated coordinator of volunteers, a planned system of work with volunteers, which means that the organization knows exactly what needs to be done, when, where, what kind of volunteers they need, and what kind of support, training, motivation, and support they will provide.

The second model is to address pupils and students and to engage them subsequently in the volunteer activities of specific organizations in cooperation with school representatives. For example, the school will provide space for the presentation of organizations and their volunteer offers (through posters, information materials, website links, discussions, lectures, etc.). Subsequently, the school does not cooperate with the organization and students in the actual implementation of volunteering. Pupils and students are most often engaged in helping with public collections as well as in direct work with different target groups. Moreover, experience of many NGOs demonstrates that schools are inclined toward this kind of cooperation but volunteering is in this case also seen as an extracurricular activity.

The third model presents teachers acting as volunteer coordinators or even volunteer centers - they are operating directly at schools. The volunteer management is in such a case shared by the school staff, external staff, as well as students themselves. In this case, the aim is the promotion of volunteering among students, mediating contact between them and the organizations in need of volunteers, or developing their own volunteer programs and projects involving pupils or whoever the projects' creators are. In the case of involvement of school teachers in the management of volunteer activities, this model also provides space for the reflection of the voluntary experience in relation to education or allows mutual cooperation with organizations

– for example, in the field of preparing training of volunteers or their supervision. At some schools it is possible to encounter active teachers who lead their students to engage in volunteer activities and organize such activities as well. However, the initiative also comes from the NGOs who are trying to establish long-term partnerships with schools to get students or an entire school as volunteers for their activities and projects.

The fourth model is presented by **service-learning**. Within this concept, the volunteer experience is incorporated into subjects that can have different objectives (math, geography, history, or any other subject). The methodology of teaching all or a part of a subject is based on service for the benefit of others in the community and its reflection in relation to the learning objectives. In many CEE countries, the reports analysis indicates that teachers and schools believe that they are doing service-learning, but understanding the terms and its confusion with practice hours, internship and voluntary work, it can be said that a well-developed and well-understood service-learning where the community is at the centre, is very rare. We can also speak about tendencies toward the service-learning method. Service-learning projects which were implemented at the moment of reporting were not systemized and are usually isolated projects based on donor support or a teacher's enthusiasm. Many organizations are doing projects related to volunteering and workforce training but not combining youth activism, service and learning components in a concrete service-learning method. At all levels of education in the analyzed reports of the CEE countries, we can only speak about service-learning projects rather than service-learning strategies, such as small and useful service activities for the local communities, but without systematic educational impact ("for the community" but only sometimes "with the community").

Similar forms of service-learning may occur mainly in the private sector of education. Private, and many times international schools have an approach to engage students in different forms during the education process. Through this form of education, they often find them by helping families in need, organizing themselves in student clubs, carrying out projects within different courses, and so on.

The analyzed reports indicate that volunteering and internship programs are widely promoted in CEE countries. It is well placed in some schools, but it has serious limitations in duration, placements, accountability, scope and outcome. There are many NGOs involved in charity and service programs, especially in the main cities. A significant number of high-school pupils are involved as volunteers in these programs but these are mostly individual initiatives.

Formal educational systems in many countries in CEE region did not go through major changes in decades, and implementation of service-learning in practice depends on the creativity and enthusiasm of individual teachers, as well as on the freedom they are experiencing in schools and universities. Therefore, service-learning initiatives are often developed and implemented as non-formal educational programs of different NGOs.

We can identify several interesting examples of service-learning development in some countries in CEE region. Some examples are presented above.

Hungary

In Hungary according to the Education Act (2011) issued on January 1st 2016 the condition of issuing the Certificate of the Secondary School Leaving (Matriculation) is student's completion of 50 hours of community service. Community service is defined as: "social or environmental activity done for the advantage of the local community of the student; as well as its educational processing. The activity is

carried out within organised framework, individually or in group and is independent of financial interests.” Teachers’ Handbook for Youth Service activities was written by the Foundation for Democratic Youth and was published in June 2012 in order to support the work of secondary school teachers who have to support their students’ service activities. The Handbook offers pedagogical background, methodological suggestions, project descriptions, and personal accounts of various service project participants. The Foundation’s trainers held teacher trainings as well. The Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development was founded by the Ministry of Human Resources. Their task was to develop a community service programme and support its implementation. To assist the introduction of community service, in 2012 the Institute developed a multifunctional portal to share contents and sample documents and to support professional contacts and communication between schools and host organizations: www.kozossegi.ofi.hu. The Institute organized information days and prepared a study manual for schools, students and host institutions on the subject of school community service. Zsuzsa Matolcsi, expert on service-learning in Hungary, mentioned during the conference “Introducing the Service-learning pedagogy in education” in Sarajevo (2017) several problems occasioned by compulsory community service. These problems can be important also for other countries in the region, if they think about making service-learning compulsory:

- compulsory community service does not really match anything in the school’s life;
- little money, service-learning “lessons” are not rewarded;
- the coordinator’s work is not rewarded;
- there is no energy or capacity to do community service;
- too much administration in implementation of community service projects;
- not enough “reception space” (NGOs or institutes);
- little time and experience to do their own projects;
- facilitation is a new, scary role for teachers;
- 1200 schools would need a training in service-learning;
- teachers do not see the importance of community service.

Slovakia

Service-learning, which is a relatively new pedagogical strategy in Slovakia, is virtually unknown in the academic environment or in educational practice. At Matej Bel University (MBU), however, the strategy has been applied since the academic year 2005/2006, and it can be stated that MBU is the leader in this field in Slovakia, conducting research, solving grants and publishing nationally and abroad. Elsewhere in Slovakia, only the Prešov University in Prešov devotes any time to service-learning and then only in the education of social workers; the Catholic University of Ružomberok is, at present, only in the initial phases of its introduction. There are also several elementary and secondary schools conducting service-learning pilot projects (many in cooperation with the Volunteer Centre in Banská Bystrica and MBU). The specificity of service-learning development in Slovak conditions is its connection with education for volunteering and civic engagement. In April 2018, the *Strategy for Education of Children and Youth for Volunteering in Slovakia* (Konceptia výchovy a vzdelávania detí a mládeže k dobrovoľníctvu) was adopted by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. The strategy is based on the principles of service-learning pedagogy and its goal is to create the prerequisites for the implementation of education for volunteering at all levels of education (also at universities). At the present time, the working group is preparing an educational programme and methodology for teachers to implement strategy in practice. The development of service-learning is connected not only with the educational policy, but also with the volunteering policy and there seem to be very good connections in the future. It enables to join more stakeholders from different fields in the process.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

International association “Interactive open schools” (shortly MIOS Tuzla) implements projects in formal education since 2004. First projects were about interactive learning and school democratization and they were delivered in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. Their mission is to develop Community Schools as effective organizations of learning and teaching with students in the center of the process. In the recent past they deliver teacher trainings, networking events and other forms of gathering professionals from schools and communities to increase the quality of teaching processes and to make learning closer to students’ interests and needs. Since the beginning, the organization is implementing the project Development of interactive open schools and Service-Learning is part of the approach. They are currently working with 45 schools within Bosnia and Herzegovina in areas of Community Schools development and innovations in teaching and learning processes. Service-Learning is an integral part of the Community School development since it connects school learning and community as places where learning can happen. Elementary and secondary schools develop and deliver Service-Learning projects since 2009 in repeated cycles throughout the school years. MIOS has developed programs for educating teachers and trainers about Service-Learning, trainer’s and material resources, the network of school that implement Service-Learning practice. Schools have delivered diverse Service-Learning practices for example on ecology, culture, citizenship. MIOS has connections and partnerships with different organizations within the country and internationally to share knowledge, practice and enlarge the community of Service-Learning.

In the last couple of years Genesis Project has also incorporated service-learning as one of their central strategies in their work for peaceful conflict prevention and resolution in schools around BiH.

Romania

One organization that has started to develop the service-learning concept in Romania is New Horizons Foundation. The foundation addresses youth (12-18 years old) and its motto is developing caring citizens who feel empowered to act. In this view, New Horizons aims to develop youth’s vocational skills, civic competencies, responsibility and concern for the communities where they live. The areas of activity of New Horizons Foundation are: non formal education in schools, service-learning, adventure education, vocational activities, and protection of the environment. The foundation developed so far two major projects: VIATA (adventure education program) and IMPACT (service-learning youth clubs). The IMPACT program develops the service-learning component of New Horizons’ activity. Service-learning is a tool by which young people learn how to write and implement community service projects. The main objectives of service-learning are the following: (1) to encourage youth to meet the community needs through service projects, (2) to provide the youth with practical abilities, necessary in implementing community projects; (3) to promote values and norms that are concordant with the civic attitudes and mutual respect. This way, service-learning contributes to involving youth in community issues, providing youth with practical abilities and developing the qualities required by a democratic environment. The IMPACT program consists of youth initiative clubs, in which the pleasant activities from the adventure education are innovatively combined with the characteristics of service-learning. The IMPACT model is simple and easily replicable. Members of each club meet twice a week. The activities have three components: an entertaining activity (a game), followed by a discussion of the game results; a story and the discussion of its meanings; a training (on issues like the improvement of communication, project management, Excel applications) needed for writing community service projects. These projects must be written, implemented and evaluated in three months. There is a special focus on vocational and social capital development in the IMPACT clubs. Every club consists of 15 members and 4 youth leaders who are trained to facilitate the IMPACT meetings. New Horizons has prepared a manual for the IMPACT leaders, as well as a set of three trainings to assist

them in coordinating the club activities. Besides the manual and the trainings, the leaders can use a database with games, stories and trainings, and a curriculum. The target group is youth 12-18 years old. Materials are also in English language. Also, Higher Education Institutions in Romania, such as Babes-Bolyai University and other universities, are strongly encouraging community-oriented volunteering activities of students and have recently started to increase the level of awareness toward Service-Learning concept through research and international collaborations.

Montenegro

The concept of service-learning pedagogy is new in Montenegro. It can be said that in Montenegro students have had a chance to participate in extra-curricular institutional volunteering; non-systematic solidarity initiatives and volunteering and field work, internships and practice with no social intent, but not to either develop or participate in service-learning projects so far. Since the changes in Montenegrin higher educational systems are slow (curriculum flexibility, correlation between subject, competencies based, labor market/society oriented curriculum), there is vast need to foster this connection now and to promote service-learning pedagogy as an approach that is useful both for students and communities. Student's practical placements in MNE are an unused mechanism that mostly ends up on just visiting different stakeholders without any implementation of gained knowledge and skills, not to mention the possibility to gain new, develop or improve students' skills and competencies. The new Montenegrin strategy on higher education (2016-2020) envisages more hours for students' practical placements and a clear need for professors and faculties' management to provide support in connecting community with academia. Evaluation that was done as a baseline for this strategy showed that one of the aspects for major improvement is practical placement in higher education. This can be illustrated by the quote: 'In most of the cases, practical placements are not structural, nor they have formal grade implications, approach to practical placement is not focused on expected result. Moreover, in some cases students need to find places for practice on their own, not paying attention to the nature of the place and content.' All mentioned above directs to obvious need of Montenegrin educational system to include service-learning as a suitable practice. At the beginning Forum MNE connected with Faculty of political science-University of Montenegro (Forum MNE's cooperation with this university unit has been ongoing for several years so far mainly in the area of providing some opportunities for students' practice in our programs/projects); Faculty of visual arts, University of Mediterranean (Forum MNE's cooperation with this private university began recently again in the area of improvement of practice for students). Sometimes, private universities seem to be more open for changes and development of new approaches/projects/programs and it can be motivational for public university units); In the future, Forum MNE is planning to connect with as many schools, faculties and organizations working with the community as possible, in order to include service-learning as a suitable practice in the educational system of Montenegro.

Serbia

Service learning is not recognized in Serbia as a concept of rising up awareness towards society. Young people at the universities mostly do not know what it means. 'Kolping društvo Srbije' promotes service-learning. A new cycle of projects started in 2018 and will include 15 schools in southern Serbia. The previous project included 8 schools and more than 250 pupils. People in Serbia are very dedicated and sensitive when they recognize a higher cause or an urgent situation that requires service to society, but unfortunately they are not organized in a proper way. This is particularly visible among young students at the universities, who are willing to serve the society. Service-learning is efficient if properly followed by the change in classroom. It can improve the connection to the local community and may promote out-of-the-box thinking among pupils/students. However, it is time and resource consuming and requires motivation and hard-work of instructors

Albania

Well-developed and well-understood Service-Learning where the community is at the centre is still missing in the country. Activities similar to Service-Learning may occur mainly in the private sector of education. Private schools have an approach to engage students in different forms during the education process. Through this form of education, they often find them by helping families in need, organizing themselves in student clubs, carrying out projects within different courses, and so on. Examples of this are Turgut Ozal College, Beder University College, etc. Learning goals and service outcomes are not institutionally linked in Albania. Volunteerism and internship programs are widely promoted, but community service is not. Volunteerism is promoted through NGOs and projects and internship are widely promoted institutionally. It is well placed officially at every school's level, but it has serious limitations in duration, placements, accountability, scope and outcome. There are community centres and "schools as service providers for the community" being supported by Save the Children or UNICEF, but not real "Service-Learning" projects per se from institutions or big international organizations. The important first step is being introduced in Lezha, a town in Northern Albania, just 60 km from the capital Tirana, where Mary Ward Foundation started a Service-Learning Project with the Rogationist school in September 2017. The project combines the learning process in the classroom with the work in the community, promoting active engagement and citizenship skills of students to solve real problems in the community. The ideas for community involvement were collected from students themselves, as a way to engage them from the beginning in the community life, thinking and serving mood. You may find material on their development here <https://albaniahope.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/service-learning-anglisht.pdf> (in English) and here <https://www.albaniahope.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/service-learning-shqip.pdf> (in Albanian language).

Kosovo

Service-Learning projects implemented in Kosovo are not systematic and are usually single projects based on donor support. Many organizations are developing projects related to volunteering and workforce training but not combining youth activism, service and learning components with a concrete service-learning method. According to the report, in Kosovo there was one organization that might have done service-learning - Kolping Kosova. This organization has done past projects showing good service-learning but is currently dormant. Through a mix of stakeholder interviews, a quantitative survey and focus groups that nongovernmental organization TOKA conducted during 2017, an opportunity for service-learning in Kosovo can be seen. There is increased interest in volunteering from youth and at the institutional level. There is now legislation that recognizes volunteering as legitimate work experience. While there are many events and support for volunteering, the practical implementation of quality volunteering projects falls flat. Volunteering also fails to address some of Kosovo's main concerns including workforce preparation and skills development. TOKA sees great potential in using service-learning to tackle some of these main concerns in a systematic way. The difficulties that TOKA experienced during the situation analysis have been lack of understanding of service-learning and confusion between what makes service-learning different from volunteering. They had the opportunity to support service-learning projects, implement projects, and be partners in service-learning projects. These diverse experiences have helped TOKA gain a multidimensional perspective on service-learning in Kosovo and how to continue making an impact. Deeper training and support are needed in order to capacity build both schools and NGO's to create quality service-learning programs. Schools have the motivation to do these projects, but lack skills like project management, budgeting, and resources (money, time, trainings) that would make service-learning projects effective. The NGO's generally saw more success in the quality of service-learning, but reliance on donor funding compromised the integrity when they had other priorities and requirements to fulfill. Service-learning has the potential to be highly influential in Kosovo as it addresses priorities of both

institutions and individuals. Significant concentrated and quality work is required to build a strong skill foundation in service-learning that can then be systematically spread throughout Kosovo.

International initiatives and networking

There is also a strong need for **international cooperation and networking** in CEE region between organizations developing service-learning programs inside and outside the region. **International projects** supported from different schemes are offering the opportunity for more intensive cooperation. Some examples of such projects supporting the development of service-learning in the region may be seen below:

A. Project Schools as generators of democratic society (2014 – 2016) was implemented by partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Poland, Slovakia, Czech republic and Kosovo supported by Visegrad funds. The general goal was to develop international cooperation and networking between schools of W Balkan and V4 countries and ensure understanding of the schools role in developing democratic processes within the society. The project networked schools from five participating countries and made an innovation in combining schools work and community life as a resource for student's learning (service-learning). Through the service-learning projects students learned skills and techniques about critical thinking, established international cooperation and were able to use or apply the knowledge within local settings.

B. Service-learning in higher education – fostering the third mission of universities and civic engagement of students (SLIHE) is an Erasmus + project (2017 – 2020). The main objective of the project is to strengthen capacities of HEIs in the fulfillment of their third mission and to improve civic engagement of students through implementation of the innovative strategy of service-learning in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The partial aim of the project is to improve quality and relevance of study offer in the field of implementation of service-learning strategy in the higher education curricula through development of training curricula and materials adapted to the context of Central and Eastern European countries. The project coordinator is Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. Project partners come from Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia, Germany and Austria, associated partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Argentina. Among main innovative outcomes of the project there are: 1) training for teachers in service-learning and a guide for trainers, 2) manual for implementation of the service-learning strategy in higher education, 3) recommendations for implementation of service-learning in HEIs and best practice examples. This kind of outcomes are in the process of being produced and they are of key importance for service-learning development and implementation in the region. The outputs will be published in English as well as in national languages.

C. In the last years **CLAYSS** has also had an important role in the development of service-learning and capacity building in CEE region. The most important activities developed recently in the region in this respect are:

- supporting the participation of regional leaders in International Service-Learning Week in Buenos Aires, which includes visits to service-learning experiences, Researchers Symposium, Ibero-American service-learning network meeting and Conference.
- Support to regional institutions, that includes bibliographic material, scholarships to online courses, participation in SL Week in Buenos Aires and Training events onsite in the following institutions:
 - o Matej Bel University. Banska Bystrica, Slovakia;

- o Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia;
- o University of Tuzla, Bosnia Herzegovina;
- Open conferences:
 - o Vienna, Austria;
 - o Banska Bystrica and Ružomberok, Slovakia;
 - o Tuzla, Bosnia Herzegovina;
 - o Cluj Napoca, Romania.
- First Service-Learning Week in CEE: Sarajevo, BiH October 2017 with SL Training for future trainers in SL with contents and materials adapted to CEE region. Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina.
- 2nd. Service-Learning Week in Cluj Napoca, Romania (July 2019)
- Online courses for teachers
- Online webinars:
 - o IVth Educonference in Macedonia,
 - o Service-learning - an approach to improving education, work, and life outcomes for adolescents and youth,
 - o Service-learning- Students' engagement and functional knowledge
- Creation and adaptation of written and audiovisual content such as handbooks, videos and presentations
- Delivery of Service-Learning Regional Award

In the last few years, there were also several networking and promoting activities and projects about service-learning at a European level. These projects and activities include also countries from CEE region. They are mostly focused on service-learning in higher education.

D. International project **Europe Engage – Developing a Culture of Civic Engagement through Service-Learning within Higher Education in Europe**³ was a 3-year project (2015 - 2017) funded by the European Union (Erasmus+ programme) with the purpose of identifying existing service-learning practice, promoting service-learning as a pedagogical approach, and creating a network in this region. Thanks to the activities and cooperation within the project were also other activities organized to support service-learning:

- International Association for Research on Service-Learning organized European Regional Research Conference in June 10, 2016. Bologna, Italy
- 17th Annual Conference of International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) was held in September 14-16, 2017 at National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland.
- 9th Spanish & 1st European conference on service-learning in higher education “The role of service-learning in the construction of global citizenship” was organized 20th - 22nd SEPTEMBER, 2018 in Madrid, Spain.

During the conference in Madrid in 2018 the participants agreed on setting up a working group for preparation of the formal network focusing on promoting and developing service-learning in higher education. Nowadays the establishment of the network is a part of the European Observatory of Service-learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE), project supported by Porticus.

3 1. Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain; 2. National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland; 3. Erasmus University of Rotterdam, Netherlands; 4. Ghent University, Belgium; 5. ISPA – Instituto Universitário de Ciências Psicológicas, Sociais e da Vida, Portugal; 6. IMC University of Applied Science-Krems GmbH, Austria; 7. University of Bologna, Italy; 8. University of Brighton, United Kingdom; 9. University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany; 10. University of Helsinki, Finland; 11. University of Zagreb, Croatia; 12. Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

3.1. Challenges for service-learning development in CEE region

Experts, teachers and other participants of CLAYSS on-line courses defined several challenges in the process of service-learning development in CEE region. These factors should be reflected upon by the stakeholders who want to develop projects focused on promotion and development of service-learning in this region. We use quotations from the interviews and polls made for better demonstration of categories.

At a national level, we can identify two important factors. First, educational policies and reforms in educational systems with all the challenges mentioned in the previous text. The second important factor influencing the development of service-learning is the level of civic engagement and volunteering and the general attitude of society regarding the responsibility for solving problems in society and communities. This attitude can also influence the support of parents in the development of service-learning projects.

The obstacles for implementing service-learning at **school level** consist mainly of following factors:

- **Lack of knowledge about service-learning**
 - o *“Lack of specific knowledge from the local and international organizations to support such initiatives.”*
 - o *“Many partner organizations don’t understand differences between volunteering , internship and service-learning projects.”*
 - o *“No literature in own language about service-learning.”*
 - o *“Absence of pedagogical materials for teachers.”*
 - o *“Confusion between what makes service-learning different from volunteering.”*
 - o *“Lack of skills connected with service-learning implementation like project management, budgeting, and resources (money, time, trainings).”*
- **Lack of financial resources in schools**
 - o *“Lack of financial means in schools makes every project difficult. Service-learning might require financial support, which schools cannot provide.”*
 - o *“There is little financial support.”*
- **Overload of projects at schools**
 - o *“There is an overload of organizations and projects, especially in the big cities, which have caused a sense of fatigue among schools’ principals and teachers, who are not very enthusiastic about new projects. However, in smaller cities and rural areas, projects are still welcome and implementable, especially when they are implemented by reputable organizations.”*
- **Needed permission from other institution**
 - o *“Challenging timing and interaction with the Ministry of Education, responsible for all schools and issuing permission to implement educational projects; however, communication is possible and it can go very smooth, once the permission is agreed.”*
- **Time consuming teaching and no rewards**
 - o *“Worry that this teaching strategy is more time-consuming and requires more devotion than traditional seminar teaching.”*
 - o *“Community activities of teachers are not part of their evaluation”.*

- **Logistical difficulties in implementing service-learning projects**
 - o *"The classes are usually big and it is hard to organize students in groups with similar levels of motivation that will work productively at the same place."*
 - o *"The NGOs and other social institutions have to safeguard the personal data of their clients and it is quite complicated to let some students enter into their data system."*
 - o *"It implies extra administration work."*
- **Lack of autonomy in curriculum design**
 - o *"Teachers have a relatively minor role in the process of curriculum design. They have less freedom to innovate in their teaching, but also little tradition and motivation to innovate."*
 - o *"Limits imposed by the standardization of education."*
- **Lack of support for innovations in teaching and learning**
 - o *"It might take time to accept such kind of innovation."*
 - o *"The difficulties lie in the mentality of most people that getting involved is in vain, it does not really change anything."*
 - o *"Teachers, school leaders not ready for an "adventure".*
 - o *"Resistance to new."*
 - o *"There is no such a support for novelties and secondly on the level of personal initiative which lacks some courage of trying something new in education."*
 - o *"Weak motivation for innovation in the school curriculum."*
 - o *"Long-term distrust in experimental and non-formal education in any form."*
 - o *"Preparation in how to use the experimental and non-formal learning methods is absent."*
- **Teacher's attitudes regarding students' voice and civic engagement**
 - o *"Most of the secondary school teachers do not consider students' personal development their high priority."*
 - o *"Teachers have little experience in functioning democratically; they see little value in and few examples for responsible and active citizenship."*
 - o *"Teachers do not necessarily see connection between community service and the well-being of society and individuals."*
 - o *"Teachers do not necessarily believe that they can really influence their students or that they can achieve any change in them."*

The above-mentioned factors can also influence the interests of students in subjects based on the service-learning strategy. Teachers who are not convinced about the usefulness of this concept mainly due to their own lack of experience, are not able to motivate students to participate. According to the experts involved in the preparation of the report, we can also find opponents of non-formal education among students. They sometimes think that only formal education and lectures are the "right" education. They want to be educated in the classroom and if the education is taking place outside the school, and in vulnerable communities, it ceases being "lucrative" for them. We can also notice other paradoxes. Sometimes, students think that to gain credits for a service-learning course is a simpler way than traditional education. They are motivated to enroll for the subject, however, after they discover that service-learning projects need not only personal investment and knowledge but also time, they lose their pragmatic interest. All of these factors are caused by the relationship with education, by a low willingness to step outside of one's comfort zone, but also by the absence of education for civic responsibility and engagement at all levels of education. It also documents the low sensibility toward social problems.

3.2. Possibilities and recommendations for service-learning development in CEE region

All participants of the mapping believe that service-learning in their country has a future, mainly in terms of the benefits it can bring to all involved actors. They also mentioned that it is quite a challenging task to implement service-learning projects, having in mind different actors involved in this process, and many problems educational systems are facing, but not an impossible one.

“I am very convinced that service-learning is first of all, a very effective methodology for students to own the subject matter in detail and in a practical form; secondly it’s profitable for the student’s personal growth in having a holistic understanding of how a curricula subject can affect the society and community around him, making it more tangible and making the student feel more useful as he/she goes through his/her studies; thirdly, service-learning is very context sensitive and that makes it easily adaptive, making sense to all kinds of conditions, which can be very paradoxical in my country” .

“Service-learning would be mostly welcome and valuable. The development of civic engagement of pupils and students in the community and society is something that is of the utmost importance for a variety of reasons. ... Without communities, there would be no way for a society to function. They represent an essential aspect of the human experience and of human development. ... Service-learning is a proven approach to strengthening communities. As a philosophy of education, it is gaining momentum and being applied in schools and universities worldwide. Service brings community together as a whole, towards a common goal or purpose. The action of service in and among the community provides chances for socio-cultural norms and prejudices to be removed. ...Service-learning would involve youth as active citizens for problem-solving and for bringing systemic change in their communities. This is a much-desired change in the classic education approach, school-based and theory-grounded learning.”

“Service – learning definitely can become a successful practice. It would be a great opportunity for developing active and involved citizens. Programs like this can lead to:

- better civic awareness and involvement of the students
- the rise of the student’s motivation for learning and for attending school
- the rise of academic results
- the improvement of school links in the community
- improvement of the learning atmosphere in schools; reduction of bullying;

It would create bonds between school & community, it would help to meet the needs and offer a framework for developing life skills, it would make learning alive and meaningful to the students, it would encourage the leadership, entrepreneurship, teamwork and togetherness. It would encourage the NGOs and companies to bring their contribution. “

Change in educational systems, change in society

In order to support service-learning development in the CEE region, two ways of argumentation can be used. The first is based on the need of changes in education. It can offer answers on many (not all) challenges facing education in CEE countries. The second is based on the existing problems and the need of civic engagement

development. Many countries in CEE region are still going through transition, in which many problems are developing and exist in local communities. This is the space where students at different educational levels could give their support and develop projects which could be beneficial for both the community and the students. Service-learning development can be fostered also through an emphasis on student-centred learning - an approach to education which aims at overcoming some of the problems inherent to more traditional forms of education by focusing on the learner and their needs, rather than being centred around the teacher's input. Student-centred learning was fully taken into the process during the **Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial conference, in 2009**. With the **Bucharest Communiqué (2012)**, the Ministers reiterated their committed to "Establish conditions that foster student-centred learning, innovative teaching methods and a supportive and inspiring working and learning environment, while continuing to involve students and staff in governance structures at all levels". In the **Yerevan Communiqué (2015)**, the Ministers confirmed that "Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the European Research Higher Education Area."

Formal and non-formal education or education and service/volunteering

Service-learning can be promoted in formal, as well as non-formal education or as a connection between formal and non-formal education. Two directions can be identified. Service-learning projects can be developed by schools and universities – formal education through educational policy, but also they can be promoted within the NGO's as a strategy for youth work – through youth policy. Service-learning can be also recognized as a way of education for volunteering or active citizenship.

Different levels of education

Space for service-learning development can be offered at all levels of education in CEE region, with the particularities to be considered in each level.

Private and public schools

Service-learning can be developed both in public and in private schools. This strategy can be better accomplished in private schools for the following reasons:

- These schools use this form as a promotional tool, in a sector where competition is very large.
- Private education institutions, in addition to the mandatory curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, may add additional courses, thus creating space for implementation of service-learning.
- Pedagogical and academic staffs of private institutions are paid better and devote more to new forms of teaching.
- Pupils/students of private educational institutions come from a richer layer of society, which allows them to become part of various activities during the educational process, although engagement in service-learning projects doesn't depend on the income or socioeconomic situation of children and youth.
- Private school infrastructure offers greater advantages for the implementation of service-learning.

Based on the mapping and need assessment of academic teachers regarding the implementation of the SL in university environment realized within the **SLIHE project** we did the summary of recommendations for future service-learning development in CEE region. We divided the summary in four sections based on the identified categories as a result of content analyses of countries reports, as it follows: 1) Conditions for service-learning development; 2) Education of teachers in service-learning; 3) Content of education of teachers in service-learning; 4) Practice of service-learning implementation.

1) Conditions for service-learning development

- Support from management of universities/schools on all levels;
- Cooperation between teachers, departments, schools;
- Coordination of service-learning strategy at school level;
- Recognition of the effort - for teachers (monetary and non-monetary) and for students (credits, certificates ...) involved in service-learning.
- Strengthening the national capacities to disseminate service-learning is needed in CEE countries

2) Education of teachers in service-learning

- Teachers need to be educated in service-learning;
- Education needs to be connected with continuing support, mentoring and sharing experiences;
- Training in service-learning should be based on interactive methods of education and should be provided in mother tongue language.

3) Content of education of teachers in service-learning

The participants identified several topics which need to be covered during the teacher's education in service-learning:

- How to find and engage community partners and maintain long-term cooperation;
- How to map the needs in community and how to understand the needs of the community;
- How to set up service goals and connect learning with them;
- How to reflect with students;
- How to motivate students for development of service-learning projects;
- To have useful tools for implementation of service-learning in courses;
- Introduction of typical service-learning projects, problems and how to solve them;
- How to shift the other activities (practice, internship, volunteering) to service-learning;
- Present different models of service-learning implementation;
- To have "first 10 steps where to start – tips and tricks";
- Evaluation of students' work, especially when they work in pairs/groups – how to evaluate their personal engagement and performance;
- How to reduce risks that students may encounter during service-learning;
- How to assess the impacts of service-learning on students and communities.

4) Practice of service-learning implementation

- To connect service-learning implementation with the practice/internship of students
- Teachers need to define which competences can be developed through service-learning
- Promoting both academic and civic competencies developed through service-learning
- Have a longer time (not only one semester) for service-learning projects implementation
- Have quality standards in service-learning and key principles of service-learning to distinguish it from case studies, internships etc.
- Addressing in details the obligations and activities workload (How many hours? Who goes where? How many consultations?) for students.

3.3. Organizations developing service-learning in CEE region

Albania

Mary Ward Loreto Foundation in Albania; www.albaniahope.com

Bosnia and Herzegovina

MIOS; www.ioskole.net

Genesis Project; www.genesisbl.org

Croatia

University of Rijeka; www.uniri.hr

University of Zagreb; www.unizg.hr

Czech republic

Palacký University in Olomouc; www.upol.cz

Hungary

Volunteering Hungary - Centre of Social Innovation (ÖKA); <http://www.oka.hu>

Kosovo

TOKA; <http://www.toka-ks.org>

Montenegro

ForumMNE; <http://www.forum-mne.com>

Romania

New Horizont Foundation; www.noi-orizonturi.ro

Transylvania Collage; www.transylvania-college.ro

Babes Bolyai Uuniversity in Romania; www.ubbcluj.ro

Slovakia

Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica; www.umb.sk; www.servicelearning.umb.sk

Volunteer Centre, Banská Bystrica www.centrumdobrovolnictva.sk

Platform of volunteer centres and organizations; www.dobrovolnickecentra.sk

Prešovská univerzita v Prešove, www.unipo.sk

Greenfoundation; www.greenfoundation.eu

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