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PRESENTATION

The aim of the CLASS project is to provide teachers with new pedagogical tools and approaches adapted to new needs in order to involve organizations and companies with different horizons, not only in education, in a broader vision of education that focuses not only on knowledge and skills but also on common universal needs and values

In the CLASS project, scientific cooperation between four European partner countries (Italy, leader, France, Germany and Portugal) is developing tools to combat early school leaving and to promote the 8 key competences agreed in the European framework (EC, 2006 & 2018). The CLASS project is

a continuation of the SCHOLA project (<https://www.schola-erasmus.eu/>). SCHOLA demonstrated the value of an innovative approach to involving students through extracurricular activities such as volunteering. The added value of the CLASS project is to design Intellectual outputs meant to support teachers to identify and assess a voluntary experience implemented by their students coordinated by the University of Perugia -UNIPG, Italy); to suggest a pedagogical support for educators coordinated by Solco srl (Italy); and to spread the word thanks to an ebook coordinated by the Insitute for Research and Information on Volunteering (IRIV, France).

The CLASS means to tackle the issue of early school leaving (ESL), insisting on the main benefits of volunteering to combat ESL and to enhance a success at school.

The first issue of our Newsletter, published in September 2020, explained the issues faced by schools in times of Covid and its impact on the associations in social and economic terms as well as on the involvement of volunteers. In this second issue, we mean to suggest some ideas and thoughts to schools and associations in order for them to welcome young volunteers, on the basis of initiatives taken by the members of the CLASS team



TACKLING THE ISSUE OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

European education and training systems lose too many young people each year. They are not equipped with adequate skills for later life. Fighting against Early School Leaving (ESL) has been recognized as one of the main challenges faced by European societies. For the majority of young people, leaving education and training prematurely

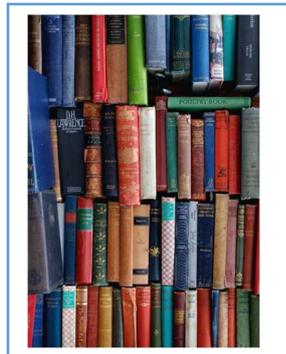
is both a result of educational, psychological and social problems and a cause of continuous social insecurity (European Commission, 2011). Reducing ESL has been a main priority of all EU countries since 2000.



THE MAIN BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING FOR YOUNGSTERS

Volunteering is no longer a marginal phenomenon. It has become a crucial issue since the beginning of the 1990s with a series of studies conducted on a European and International levels (University Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, USA including contributions for EU countries) insisting on the positive impact of Volunteering as a touchstone of civil society (macro-level), on the role played by NGOs on inclusion, solidarity and equality of chances (meso-level) and on the many benefits on volunteers as a means to create and develop both social

capital and human capital (micro-level). Volunteers and especially youngsters acquire personal, social and professional skills. Being a volunteer also means being an active citizen. It includes the concepts of altruism, charity but also diversity and otherness.



VOLUNTEERING & SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

Volunteering has been set forward as a main example of non formal and informal learning and as a cornerstone in the Valuing Prior Learning process (VPL). It may be considered as an alternative pedagogical strategy amongst pupils who face difficulties at school or who have already dropped out. Volunteering was officially recognized on a European level thanks to the Year of European Volunteering (EYV 2011) but since the Copenhagen process (2002) several European projects have enhanced this innovative approach

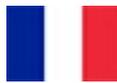
in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).



in Italy

In the months following the first phase of the pandemic COVID-19 in Spring 2020, the CSV Network has worked not only on ordinary services, but above all to be more equipped and prepared for a possible new emergency, which unfortunately is already underway in Italy starting from October 2020. The CSV Network had the time to understand what worked and what didn't and to make use of one of the most important lessons received in recent months, namely "that emergencies are accelerators of processes already underway and that you can't improvise". One of the processes from which there is no turning back is digitalization, which was considered as a "small revolution" during the lockdown. In the Lazio Region in the past months ad hoc online trainings have been implemented: "*Technologies yes / Technologies no*. ICT support for remote interaction- between constraints and opportunities ". They were organized by the CSV in the Lazio and divided into 5 webinars, scheduled from November 2020 to January 2021. The online course was created in order to "try to understand if what has arisen as a response to an emergency can become an opportunity for positive transformation of management of communications and interrelationships ".

LINK: <https://www.csvnet.it/component/content/article/144-notizie/3835-reagire-alla-pandemia-torna-la-formazione-online-dei-csv?Itemid=893>



in France

The schools were closed during the first lockdown of Springtime 2020 but they re-opened in September 2020 and didn't close during the second lockdown. The reason for this was the negative impact of the absence of school on children especially the ones who couldn't be supported at home by their families. This is not so easy to become a teacher for your children because teaching requires special skills and competences ; in complement even for teachers, teaching with your own children may be too demanding as they are usually more impatient with their own children. As a result, heads of schools and teachers were back to work in September 2020 but it would be hard to say to normal activities with the very special conditions due to the pandemics. Extra-curricular activities were the activities mainly affected by the special health conditions ; so the suggestions for any voluntary activities are jeopardized . Hopefully in 2021 with the vaccine all activities including extra-curricular activities and voluntary activities could be once more implemented.

source: dr Bénédicte Halba, iriv, Paris, 2021.



in Germany

The situation in schools in Germany in spring 2020 was characterized by a ten-week lockdown from the Easter vacations in March to the summer vacations. During this time, schools developed strategies for renewed face-to-face teaching. This was applied from the new school year 2020/21. The experience of the first lockdown reinforced the goal of keeping schools open as long as possible to provide students with access to education and participation and to ease the burden on families. Last but not least, one goal of this approach is to ensure the protection of children's well-being.

Although regular classes have been restored through various pandemic- protection- measures, there are massive restrictions on cooperative and social learning, in addition to the mandatory masking and distance requirements in schools. Extracurricular activities such as internships, student exchanges or sports cooperation are also not possible during this time. It is very understandable that some schools, despite initial willingness to participate in the Class Project, have had to withdraw their willingness to participate. Others schools see opportunities for implementation and are working on implementation options for 2021.



in Portugal

As in other countries, schools in Portugal closed in March 2020. After a period in which the country had to reorganize itself, classes were restarted in the online format for children / young people until the 9th grade. For young people in the 3rd cycle, face-to-face education was resumed, with appropriate safety measures.

Although face-to-face classes started in September, with the necessary protective measures and restrictions, they were interrupted again in January for two weeks and resumed online, after that period of no school activities.

Our Government has always defended that schools should be kept open, the experience of the 1st confinement has shown that there were unfavorable consequences not only in terms of the mental health of children / young people but also of the entire family and professional dynamics of parents. The most disadvantaged students and those who need supports were the most affected.

Volunteering is one of the themes of the Citizenship and Development subject that is present throughout all the study cycles.

source: Desincoop team, January 2021



- ideas and thoughts suggested to Association to welcome young volunteers



in Italy

The CSV Network is looking for solutions **to reduce the digital gap and between generations**, according to recent studies these are among the main challenges for the Third sector that emerged from the assessments of the Service Centers at the end of the first wave of Coronavirus this spring. *Bridging the digital divide (between age groups or by origin or social category) is one of the main challenges for the third sector in the near future*, according to the Volunteer Service Centers. At the end of the first wave of Coronavirus-19, the issues had emerged strongly in the CSVnet reports and the analyzes of recent months have highlighted, in fact, some constant critical issues, aggravated precisely by the health crisis, which are guiding research by CSV of new responses to the needs of associations and volunteers. One of the objectives is, for example, to promote active aging, but also to foster an intergenerational path of mutual knowledge, integration and cultural exchange.

LINK: <https://www.csvnet.it/component/content/article/144-notizie/3848-csv-in-campo-per-ridurre-il-gap-digitale-e-tra-generazioni?Itemid=893>



in France

Associations have lost part of their workforce, mainly older volunteers as they belong to the sensitive audience for the Coronavirus. It might be an opportunity to be open to other profiles of volunteers, including the will to prepare a new generation of volunteers. The main issue remains the capacity to dedicate relevant people to be able to welcome, train and support these young volunteers as they are not “ready for the fight” in the short term. This is a long term approach and associations are usually in a short term approach. Thanks to the Coronavirus, associations may change their minds and change their process of work. some ideas have been enhanced in the past years, mainly since 1990 with the International

Convention for youngsters that has recognised the right for youngsters (minor ones) for creating or being involved in associations. As far as France is concerned this freedom of association among youngsters (under 18 years old) has been enhanced by associative movement belonging to the so-called “Education populaire” such as the Ligue de l’Enseignement that has been a pioneer association to support the creation of associations by young volunteers aged 16 years – they are called “Junior associations”.

source: Bénédicte Halba (2004), “Les jeunes et les associations” in “Galaxie Jeunesse”, Marly le Roi : 2004.



in Germany

Charities and smaller third sector organizations, similar to most companies in Germany, are highly stressed with the management of the pandemic situation. Issues such as the implementation of hygiene concepts for the performance of regular work, as well as the organization of their own human resources (for example, due to the risk of illness or family care reasons) represent a major challenge for them. In addition, the hygiene concepts of many of these organizations include reducing the number of external people in day-to-day operations as much as possible. This means that students who want to do extracurricular work or volunteer work often do not have the opportunity to do "traditional" activities there during these times. In addition, there is a lack of supporting opportunities for interns and volunteers in the organizations. In the wake of the pandemic, it is also clear that charities are also rethinking their approaches to work and developing innovative, in some cases digital, approaches to work. In these areas, the activity of volunteers is also conceivable in the future. Many associations report that they initially need time for development and that they will also be able to involve "outsiders" in the future.

Source: Caritas Borken, January 2021



in Portugal

During the first quarter of the year, we made contacts with local partner organizations, teachers and students to design together voluntary actions that correspond to the theme of the project, to the interests of institutions and students. Some organizations had their presential activities suspended, many of these meetings were over the phone and later via zoom. For this reason, two types of activities have been designed that can complement each other if the pandemic situation allows it. One of the innovations introduced was the start of the *Reading with You* project with 9th grade students. Desincoop has had an intervention with high school students with the ImaC project and, taking advantage of the increased awareness of volunteering that the CLASS project assumes, we decided to start earlier because, in the school transition process, many of these students feel lost so volunteering can become an activity that facilitates their integration. This project was adapted to the containment rules and today students continue to record readings for the elderly and people with social isolation problems.

Another aspect that we tried to address was volunteering among peers. In this sense, three problems were raised that happen with the elderly population and that have a direct relationship with sustainable development. The objective was to involve the students families and integrate another local project of the Social Center Nossa Senhora do Carmo. These problems (waste management, medication management and food product management) were proposed to young people who started to participate in the preparation of 3 webinars on these themes, involving classes from the 10th to the 12th year of professional courses. The main purpose is to train volunteers in sharing the learning they have been acquiring. As soon as the rules permit, at least 10 Geriatrics students will be able to use their knowledge in actions in the elderly's home.

Finally, and in order to optimize resources and networking, the Commerce Course students chose some local Desincoop projects that, in a way, are related to the Course and that aim to respond to the needs that the current crisis has caused in the region. The transversal project is called "*Olho 'que sobra*" (look at what's left). The products collected will be used in the social store that will open, as soon as there is authorization to settle, and some products will be shared with Refood and the informal group Helping the Next - Guimarães, which Desincoop welcomed on its premises, because both organizations have access to families that are identified, which facilitates the fast distribution of goods. Also, in this space, a bank of used glasses will be created for those who do not have the economic capacity to buy them.

Another group of students will focus on raising awareness in the catering sector for zero waste management, reuse of packaging, plastic capsules, coffee grounds and organic products. These last two products are intended for composting and will be used at Casa de Dardos, Desincoop's training space in the area of green jobs.

Activities related to sports and sustainability were suspended due to the pandemic.

Desincoop was challenged by the "Laboratório da Paisagem" (Landscape Laboratory) to create the Desincoop Green Brigades and it is participating in the Development Commission for the Municipal Youth Plan where some of these projects will be witnessed.

source: Desincoop team



- some activities conducted by the CLASS team

Workshop in Germany

In November, after lengthy planning, the pandemic situation allowed the team of Caritas Borken to hold an introductory workshop with teachers, social pedagogues and psychologists from a cooperating school. In addition to the presentation of the project approach, mainly implementation possibilities for the volunteer activity and the support by the support staff were discussed. During the event it became clear that the participants attached great importance to the topic of voluntary work and the introduction of young people to this field. Some of the teachers, themselves involved in volunteer projects, offered to make their personal networks available and to use teaching units to present the project approach by inviting volunteers they know, such as firefighters or the like, to report on their activities. It was pointed out that volunteer work and involvement in organizations and clubs has a long and important tradition in Germany and that the decline in this sector should be counteracted. In addition, different ways of implementing volunteer activities during the pandemic were discussed. Activities at a distance, as well as digital activities could be considered for this, but would have to be coordinated with the individual associations and organizations. It was assumed that some students would be particularly enthusiastic about digital activities.

Monthly Zoom meetings

Regular meetings were held in order for partners to gather thoughts on the strategy to be implemented to overcome the many obstacles to the testing of the Project with a lot of schools closed with the Coronavirus issue.

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