

TOGETHER: Implement service learning in schools TO GET digital cultural HERitage enhanced

The objective of TOGETHER (2020-1-DE03-KA227-SCH-093556) is to develop an innovative methodology to engage secondary school students in community-based participative activities for the digitization, enhancement and protection of cultural heritage, in accordance with the principles of service learning and project-based learning.

What inspired us to develop TOGETHER?

The terrible impact of the COVID-19 emergency has put an unprecedented pressure on the cultural and creative sector across Europe, unveiling the need for greater attention, resources and a process of modernization that should first and foremost be sparked from younger generations. The discussion around digital transformation of cultural resources has been established for many years, although it has still not led to the anticipated significant impact. Now, the aftermath of the pandemic demands for a clear acceleration in action, which is going to be effective only if remarkable investments are made to provide the necessary skills and competences to the future professionals in this sector.

The TOGETHER project aims to support young students in school to engage creatively and critically with cultural resources through the smart adoption of digital technologies. This change of paradigm will call for a re-thinking of the fruition of cultural wealth, that should be digitally enhanced to improve its flexibility, accessibility and potential for inclusion. Teacher capacity, in this context, will be among the main challenges, since education practitioners tend to lack confidence and experience in developing young people's creative digital skills. For this reason, TOGETHER aims to support them with adequate training and professional development to make digital creativity emerge and be applied to cultural heritage.

Teachers have a crucial role in supporting learner development and are key change agents in school development. The report "European ideas for better learning: The governance of school education systems", developed by the ET 2020 Working Group on Schools, encourages the transformation of schools into "open learning organisations", enabling teachers and school leaders to improve both their pedagogical and their organisational practices concurrently through local collaborative research, networking and continued professional development.

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What is service learning?

Service-learning aims to create a link between students' learning objectives and actual needs from the community they are living in, therefore literally taking learning out of the classrooms and into the real life. Service learning differs from community service because it is not sporadic or made on a voluntary basis, but it is systematic and included in the school's syllabus, developed in a close and long-term relationship with the community's stakeholders.

Students will be encouraged to commit to the needs of their community in terms of devaluation and deterioration of their cultural capital, bringing their learning outside of the classrooms to see the immediate application of the knowledge received and growing a gradual sense of responsibility towards the society. The Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, adopted by the EU Council on a Commission's proposal, identifies 8 key competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion. Included among them, is active citizenship, cultural awareness and expression, entrepreneurship digital and technology-based competences. All of these are brought into the equation of the TOGETHER concept, that mainly addresses the humanities disciplines, but also holds a clear and necessary multidisciplinary approach.

What are the expected results of the project?

1. Teacher's Handbook and Competence framework

The Handbook will be a meaningful pedagogical resource made available for the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of secondary schools' teachers and leaders, providing them with an innovative educational model that leverages on digital creativity skills to formulate concepts of Service Learning and project-based learning aimed at involving students in initiatives based on the digital enhancement of local cultural heritage.

2. TOGETHER Digital Creativity Academy

The Academy will be an online educational platform that will host the digitized version of the Handbook's modules previously developed during IO1 and a Toolbox with a collection of tools, instructional materials and multimodal resources complementary to the Handbook. The aim will be to create an open online environment that will be useful for secondary school teachers and leaders to integrate the learning path taken with the Handbook, thus enhancing their learning experience. The Academy will also serve the purpose to create a social hub between all users scattered across EU, thus leading to the formation of a community of practice.

The Consortium

Partnership of the project consists of eight partners from Germany, Portugal, Serbia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Belgium, Spain and Italy. They met online for the first time on the 27th of May to establish first contacts and to share the next steps and responsibilities. The Consortium is currently working on the development of the Competence framework to be included in the Teacher's Handbook.



Partners

