

HANDBOOK FOR CONSULTANTS: HOW TO APPROACH SERVICE LEARNING THROUGH COLLEGIAL SUPPORT

Experience from the School for Sustainable Living
and Roots & Shoots programs of the Erasmus project
- Educational Leaders in Education for Sustainable
Development



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Introduction

This handbook was compiled as part of the Educational Leaders in Education for Sustainable Development (“Leaders”) project under the ERASMUS+ programme. The project aimed at creating a model in which educators of sustainable development programmes work together, support each other, and learn from one another.

In the “Leaders” project, the educators mutually planned, implemented, and reviewed the lessons within their own educational programme in the context of sustainable development, thus acquiring important skills in the field of service learning and collegial support.

Each team of educators received also support from the so-called external consultant who assisted them in implementing the programme methodology as well as in developing their mutual collegial collaboration.

The handbook provides consultants with useful tools to help educators in their mutual collegial support, as well as detailed guidance on how to proceed with the implementing of service learning programmes in educational institutions. At the same time, it provides consultants with illustrations of various situations in which they may find themselves (chapter: „*Collection of practical cases*“), including options in terms of how to address them.

How to work with this handbook?

The handbook comprises two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part focuses on the basic presentation of the project from the point of view of service learning methodology, and collegial support among educators.

The practical part is divided into three chapters, and focuses on defining the role of the consultant, the methodology implementation process in educational institutions, and offers examples of situations that may occur during the implementation stage.

In the chapter „*The role and skills of a consultant in supporting educators in the field of service learning*“ you will find various methods and techniques in the form of model proposals, templates, or so-called „cheat sheets“ you can use in different situations.

In the chapter „*Implementation of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support*“ you will learn how to support educators with the implementation of the service learning programme through collegial support in an educational institution on a step-by-step basis. In this chapter you will also find the consultants’ practical experience where they describe what worked for them in each stage, or what to look out for.

In the chapter „*Collection of practical cases*“ you will find a description of frequent situations that occurred during the collaboration of consultants with selected educational institutions, and best practices which proved to be useful in solving the challenges.

At the end of the handbook, you will also find the so called „*Inspiroamat*“ section, which contains a list of interesting resources for teaching a lesson that can either be used by you or provided to educators for their practice.

Theoretical part



1/ What is service learning?

Service learning is a learning approach that combines learning objectives with community service to provide a pragmatic, progressive learning experience while meeting societal needs. It involves participants in environmental, social or cultural projects so that they apply what they have learned at school to address the practical needs and problems of the community. It is an educational strategy in which the participants engage in activities focused on community needs and through this involvement, together with its structured reflection, the educational goals / learning outcomes are achieved.

In the programmes described below this methodology has been tested. They serve as examples of service learning. The mentioned programmes have long been implemented by the project partners: *Centre of Ecological Education SEVER*, Horní Maršov, o.p.s. (Czech Republic) which runs the School for Sustainable Living programme, *The Green Foundation* (Slovakia) and the *Jane Goodall Institute* (Austria) which involve institutions and participants in the *Roots & Shoots programme*.

The School for Sustainable Living programme³



The School for Sustainable Living (abbrev. in Czech as “ŠUŽ”) is a programme that helps schools contribute to the improvement of environment and to the improvement of quality of life in their surroundings. Through these projects, pupils, teachers, and the local community support sustainable development of the place where they live and adopt important ways of living.

Pupils from the participating schools, together with other partners from the community, think about what they can do to develop their community or school surroundings. Together, they gradually implement the proposed changes and change the place where they live for the better and at the same time they learn (they follow the local Agenda 21). These activities happen with respect to the sustainable development of the local surroundings and the world and serve therefore as practical examples of fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goal 2015 - 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs) and the “Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030” at the local level.

The School for sustainable living programme (ŠUŽ) is divided into seven steps and combines project teaching and a locally grounded learning whereby in project lessons local topics are used (natural, cultural, historical, economic, and socio-political contexts) as a unifying context for teaching. All activities aim at creating a product beneficial to the locality.

The Roots & Shoots programme⁴



Jane Goodall's *Roots & Shoots* is the youth-led compassionate leadership programme of the Jane Goodall Institute. The programme builds on the legacy and vision of Dr Jane Goodall, a world-renowned primatologist, and UN Messenger for Peace, to place the power and inspiration for creating community-based solutions to big challenges in the hands of young people. Through the programme, young people map their community to identify specific challenges their neighbourhoods face. From there, they prioritize the problems, develop a plan for a solution, and take action, all the time honing and developing their skills and attitudes to become part of the next generation of compassionate leaders. The programme was founded 29 years ago in Tanzania and flourishes in 50 countries with more than 10.000 groups.

Roots & Shoots uses the methodology of service learning, which prepares students in 4 steps (1. Acceptance of the call, 2. Community mapping, 3. Action steps, 4. Celebration and evaluation) for the implementation of their own project for the community.

Through the story of Dr Jane Goodall and other selected public figures, students are gradually introduced to the context of sustainable development. They discuss the current challenges in the society, map the problems of the locality and carry out questionnaire surveys based on which they select adequate topics for their projects. The overall teaching process takes place via the teamwork of students, and with the support from teachers and the local community (parents, libraries, pensioners' clubs, various associations, companies, etc.). Local governments provide students

³ www.skolaprozivot.cz

⁴ <https://rootsandshoots.global/>

with feedback, official permits and material or financial support, and play an important part in the preparation and implementation of student projects.

Teachers - the so-called guides or facilitators who accompany their teams on their journey through the project - play the important role in the programme. They conduct discussions with pupils, ask for their opinions and, if necessary, they try to lead them toward the right solution. They create a pleasant and safe environment in which there is room for self-realization, reflection, and solution of individual problems.

2/ What is collegial support?

We see collegial support as an opportunity for mutual and common learning.

Collegial support constitutes an equal partnership between those who provide it to one another. The learning is mutual rather than a one-way transfer of expertise or experience. If colleagues - regardless of their level of experience - solve a problem together and everyone brings their own views and ideas when solving it, it leads to a beneficial situation of mutual learning and of authentic collegial support. It also necessarily involves reflecting on what happened in practice and drawing conclusions for further action.

Why collegial support can help with the implementation of a service-based learning programme?

Both the School for Sustainable Living and the Roots & Shoots programmes are based on interdisciplinary approach which presupposes the creation of larger units composed of interrelated activities. The lessons exceed the framework of one subject (field), so a mutual collaboration of colleagues is necessary. Lessons prepared based on the principle of collegial support provide enough time to explore the problem from multiple perspectives and dimensions, making use of interdisciplinary overlaps.

These are the competencies developed by the interdisciplinary approach within the collegial support framework:

- the ability to gain distance from your profile subject (field),
- the ability to see things in broader perspective,
- the skill to search and connect various contents with the contents of other subjects to form meaningful units when implementing educational activities,
- putting emphasis on reflection – i. e. understanding the connections, discussing the difficulties and problems that have arisen, and sharing experiences and observations with each other,
- support of personal and individual development of team members. The educators often appreciate the fact that they have learned new forms of teaching and gained a new perspective on learning in general.

At the same time, the collegial support also works as a prevention against burnout - new methods and especially debates with colleagues are motivating.

How do learners benefit from collegial support?

- It enables a better and more comprehensive understanding of the topic, because it offers a mutual range of diverse views, dimensions, disciplines, objects.
- It can lead to a more efficient teaching, but also to the development of mutual help and support.

- New constructivist teaching methods also help those participants to move forward who are familiar with a different approach. They learn how to reflect on things, ask questions, etc., and thanks to the collegial support far more participants will experience this. In addition, the educators have noticed a benefit in case of less successful pupils or pupils with special needs who can become more successful and experience success when different teaching methods are used.

Collegial support improves relationships and brings organizational changes in the organization (such as school, community, etc.). It is often reported by the educators that interpersonal relationships have improved - sometimes within a support team, at times in general, and the outcome is that they more often talk about personal matters together. Collaboration is strengthened, both between educators and between participants.

3/ How to approach collegial support and service learning in practice?

In the “Leaders” project, we use the „**3T method**“ [Czech: “metoda 3S“] for collegial support - this abbreviation means 3 x together: the preparation, the implementation and the reflection of (school) classes/teaching are all carried out together by two or more educators. Colleagues create together, together they look for the best teaching methods, together they find solutions possibly not known to any of them in advance, they learn together, they support each other.

What does 3T look like in practice?

A group of educators connected through a common theme (in our case service learning and education for sustainable development) will hold a meeting to create a long-term plan for the intended period of collaboration (preferably based on analysis), agree on the working rhythm of collaboration, set common and personal goals. Together they plan lessons, implement the planned lesson and/or block, and when the lesson is over, they get together to reflect on it.

Requirements for “3T” in practice

- regularity (“it is better to have shorter meetings, but on a regular basis”),
- presence of a leader (“activator”, “driver of things”),
- critical friend (“external eye, mirror”) - a person who is not a member of the collaborating group. He or she is chosen by the members of the collaborating group - it must be someone they trust. Maybe another colleague, a friend, another educator. His or her job is to provide feedback based on what the team tells him/her (this is the so-called consultant role in our project),
- safe environment and clarity of the rules in the group,
- management support.

One of the conditions to be applied in collegial support is the active involvement of participants and the ability of educators to cooperate, plan together with colleagues and overcome possible obstacles together.

Recommendations on how to best implement service learning through collegial support:

- The team of educators clarifies their expectations from mutual collaboration and each of them says what they would like to take away from the project.
- The educators familiarize themselves with the competencies that the mutual project intends to develop and agree on exact points of their interdisciplinary collaboration, on what topics are to be taught, in what subjects, lessons, blocks, etc.

- The team presents its intentions to the management. The benefits of the project are explained - what goals and outputs may be achieved with participants using this methodology.
- The educators can also create the so-called map of places suitable for teaching.
- At the beginning, it is advisable to set the rules of collaboration and communication - both in the team of educators and in the team of participants involved in the project. It is important for all team members to clarify in advance their timeframes (time options), which they are willing and able to devote to the project.
- During the project, educators meet regularly, negotiate new tasks and deadlines. They plan lessons together. The goal is to make the plan the best possible one, with respect to the current capabilities of the team - all doubts have been examined and no one can think of any further possible improvement.
- The team of educators also holds meetings the goal of which is reflection, ideally after each mutual lesson. As part of the reflection, it is important to devote sufficient time to each step during the progression of the project, to realize what stage the team is currently at and the development of what goals or competencies the given activity is focused on. Reflection should be based on how the participants did during the lesson, what contributed to their success and what the obstacles were.



Practical part



4/ The role and skills of the consultant in supporting educators in the field of service learning

The consultant position comprises several important aspects. It requires the ability to use different approaches and support techniques depending on the needs of educators or the specific stage of the project implementation.

Although there are no clear rules set for the work of a consultant, there are certain principles that have worked for us during our collaboration with educational institutions and could be useful (especially) for consultants - beginners.

When implementing the methodology of service learning and collegial support in educational institutions, consultants most often appear in the following roles:

- *facilitator (gives support in discussions on planning or team decisions),*
- *coach (gives support in forming a vision, goals or with solving problems - individual as well as on team level),*
- *lecturer (leads or co-leads educational activities),*
- *mentor (gives individual support to educators in their fulfilling the set goals).*



Finally, the consultants are coordinators, experienced experts and representatives of their organization which has long been dealing with the subject. They also cannot proceed without the administrative and organizational skills needed in the whole process of project implementation in educational institutions. It includes initial preparation (reaching out, initial consultations, concluding a contract), the actual implementation (regular meetings with educators, ongoing monitoring, and reporting, and solving current problems and possible changes to the project) and the completion of collaboration (final reflection and evaluation of the project with institutions).

In the following section, we present selected skills of the consultant, which we think are important for the quality implementation of projects in the field of service learning and collegial support. The consultant does not need to master all the above skills and techniques from the very beginning. It is important for him or her to be sufficiently oriented in the given area and to be determined to support the development of educators. This requires a thorough knowledge of the methodology in the relevant areas, as well as the ability to be empathetic, to actively listen to and support educators during regular consultations in a friendly manner. At the same time, the ability to provide feed-

back when deviating from the basic principles of methodology or collaboration agreed at the beginning of cooperation is also important.

The consultant role is primarily that of a “critical eye” or a “critical friend” so to speak, of one who observes the overall process of implementing the new methodology in an institution. He or she does not advise, evaluate, or criticize. Upon request, he or she will provide his/her feedback, or his/her own opinion or recommendation, based on his/her own experience. His/her key role is to provide support to a team of educators, not to take responsibility for solving a particular situation or problem. It is primarily the educators’ role (they are the proprietors of the whole process and its outcome). With the view or observations, they get from their “critical friend” they do as they see fit - accept them or, on the contrary, reject them. Both cases are acceptable.

Consultant as a facilitator

By facilitation we mean primarily helping a group of people (in our case team of educators) with their decision-making. Facilitation helps the group as well as individual educators to clarify what results they want to achieve within the joint project and to set up an appropriate procedure for this.

In what situations does a consultant take on a facilitator role?

- The consultant uses facilitation techniques most often at the team meetings of educators when it is necessary to plan, decide or agree on a specific procedure.
- After the cooperation on the project has started, the consultant facilitates the so-called planning meeting of a team of educators, focused on shaping their vision, goals and plan of collaboration. With the involvement of all team participants, it is possible to deal with and consider several opinions during such meeting and thus cultivate from the very beginning a real (democratic) participation, necessary for collegial support.
- In addition, the facilitation is used during the next phases of project implementation, especially in situations that require a guided team discussion, a reflection of participants’ experiences or in the final evaluation of the project.

Basic principles of facilitation

- **The facilitator helps others (not himself/herself)**

The purpose of facilitation is to help the group succeed. If the facilitator decides in a particular situation what is the right thing to do, this principle can provide him/her with a safe guide. Let us try to forget about ourselves for the moment and focus on benefiting others.

- **He/she is impartial, does not judge**

Impartiality is one of the key requirements for successful facilitation. The facilitator is objective in a discussion. He/she maintains the same neutral attitude towards all participants, gives them the same room to express themselves, does not apply different degree of support.

- **He/she does not make any concrete decisions**

The facilitator is not to participate in the decision-making process or to evaluate the content of the discussion. He/she is not to serve as a sort of „judge“. He/she does not interfere in making concrete decisions which enables him/her to gain the necessary trust from the group. If he/she leans towards an opinion or argument, he/she jeopardizes the perception of himself/herself as an impartial expert.

- **He/she rephrases (translates), repeats, summarizes what was said**

The facilitator oversees mutual understanding among people. He/she tries to make their communication easier by translating or rephrasing the views and arguments of one participant into a language that the other participant understands. Even if we speak the same language, say, Slovak, it does happen that we imagine different things under the same word.

However, a good facilitation requires more than just translating words. There are always certain feelings behind words. Perceiving feelings correctly is not an easy task, so it is often the case for participants to talk to each other without noticing that an emotion is growing inside of them – e.g., fear, anger, or disgust.

If such a situation arises, the facilitator must intervene before the emotion gets more pronounced and affects the course of communication. Often it is enough to simply name the feelings – and just in general, mention them to point to the fact that they could manifest themselves (for example, „this might cause outrage in some of you“). When that which is hidden becomes apparent before it „reaches the surface“, its unwanted potential decreases significantly.

- **Proposes the process**

The facilitator never dictates what the team should do or how it should proceed. He/she gives suggestions only on what could happen and sees if the participants agree to his/her proposal. He/she may also invite the participants of the meeting to propose their steps or to agree on a solution.

- **Oversees the direction of the discussion**

During the discussion, it is easy to „wander off“ into various areas that are not the subject of the meeting. The role of the facilitator is to ensure that all participants address the same matters at the same time. If problem-solving options have just been generated (for example via brainstorming), then it is counterproductive for some participants to evaluate them at the same time. Everyone present must know what is going on, why and what their role is in this event.

Facilitation tools

- **The questions** are applied mainly to support and control the dynamics of group communication. Asking the so-called „open-ended questions“ allows for a wide range of answers (not just the „yes“ or „no“ answers) and develops a discussion.

- **The summary** is a tool that increases the orientation of the participants in the discussion, so that the conclusions reached are perceived equally by everyone. It is used especially in situations where it is necessary to regulate the discussion, for instance, when the group starts to lose track of the contents or tends to be debating for a long time about the marginal aspects of the issue.

- **Demarcation** of different stages of the discussion. After the summary, it is important to remind participants where they are within the process. This instrument includes both regulation and unification. It is not a dot, but a semicolon within the discussion, and marks some of its milestones.

- **Instructions** are appropriate if it is necessary to ensure or strengthen the stability of the process. They can have either a reminiscent (sense of consultation, rules agreed in the past) or a prescriptive form (creation of new rules). It is useful to place the goals and rules of the meeting in a visible place (whiteboard, notice board) so that everyone can read them at any time.

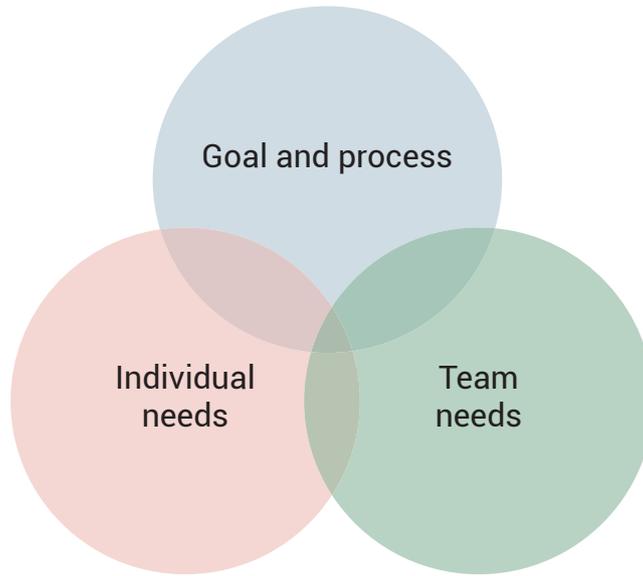
- **Comments** have the freest use as a facilitation tool. They are usually used to address the efficiency of the communication process, which we try to increase or fix.

Working with dynamic balancing in a team (“Adair’s circles”)

The team must have a **goal**, accepted by all members, and shared publicly. **The process** (activities and tasks) agreed for it constitutes a way in which this goal is achieved. Lack of attention toward the process itself leads to confusion, mistakes, poor organization of work and waste of time.

At the same time, it is desirable to respect the **needs of individuals** as well as the entire team. Neglecting them can lead to loss of motivation, disappointment or even conflict.

Adair's circles



Framework content of the facilitated meeting (Proposal)

1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of the meeting (we start at the agreed time). • Introduction of facilitator and participants (we agree on who will be taking minutes). • Introduction of the context of the meeting. • Expectations of individual participants. • Agreeing on goals. • Agreeing on common rules. • Approval of the mutual agenda, content, and timeframe of the meeting.
2. Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading the meeting process as such – we act in accordance with the agreed goals, rules, and content. • Using different methods, in line with the current situation and needs of the participants (e.g., brainstorming on finding solutions, „upside down“ brainstorming, or so-called reassessment of the situation in case a change of perspective is needed, sharing experiences in supporting participants, etc.) • Taking minutes (proposed structure): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Date and place</i> - <i>Names of participants</i> - <i>Goal of the meeting</i> - <i>Content: 1. Checking tasks from the previous period</i> <i>2. Main points of the meeting - new events, references, proposals</i> <i>3. Activities and tasks for the next period, the so-called „To do list“ (task, responsible person, deadline)</i> <i>4. Notes on the next meeting (if necessary)</i>
3. Result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of the content of the meeting, • Outputs and recapitulation of tasks („To do list“), • Concluding the meeting (we aim to finish at agreed time).

Group problem solving – „Balint method“

The Balint method (sometimes also called the Balint group) is an effective form of leaderless counselling. It is used in various fields (e.g., in healthcare, social work or education). Participants meet to discuss important topics (issues) together, which they deal with in their professional life, and they try to find possible solutions together with colleagues (in the given area).

This method helps participants find new ways to solve problems in their professional lives, reduce stress and increase participants' professionalism in their occupation.

When working with educators, a consultant can be helpful (especially in the initial phase) as the so-called facilitator of the „Balint group“, accompanying the team in question through individual stages of the meeting, thus leading the team to the solution of a particular problem. From a long-term perspective, however, it is ideal for this method to be adopted by a group of educators themselves and implemented independently of external support.

Basic characteristics of the Balint group:

- it consists of **5-10 participants**
- one discussion lasts approximately **30-40 minutes**
- the entire **process is divided into 6 stages**, which should gradually lead to the solution of a particular case.

The basic procedure when implementing the Balint group, which can be used to support a team of educators:

In the beginning, participants choose a topic to deal with (brainstorm topics they address), share their roles (usually „facilitator“ [moderating a meeting], „presenter“ [selected problem] and „consultants“ [or so-called advisers]). Under the guidance of the facilitator, the consultants discuss the problem, and together they look for solutions that could help the presenter. When finished, it is possible to carry on to the next selected topic, and the whole process will be repeated (see table below).



Fig. Final reflection and evaluation of the project. Source: Roots & Shoots Slovakia

Balint group („the cheat-sheet “)

Stage	What is going on	Where are we headed	Division of tasks
1/ Division of roles and selection of meeting topics	Each of the members introduces the topics they would like to deal with at present (we can write them down on a flipchart or a board). Subsequently, the group selects specific ones (ideally 2 or 3, depending on the length of the meeting), which are to be dealt with. Following roles are determined: facilitator, presenter, consultants, a person taking minutes (optional)	Each participant knows what topic will be discussed in the following discussion and what is his/her role in it.	It is the presenter whose topic is usually chosen for the discussion. The facilitator can be anyone within the group (subsequently the roles can be swapped).
2/ Presentation of the case	The presenter gives basic information about the situation or the problem he/she is dealing with momentarily.	All participants understood the outlines of the problem.	The presenter describes the case and gets support from the facilitator. Consultants listen (only) at this point, after the case has been presented, they may still ask for any ambiguities to be clarified.
3/ Key question	The presenter formulates his/her key question, which he would like to hear the answer to.	All participants understood the key question the presenter has asked.	The presenter tries to formulate a specific key question related to the problem in question and the facilitator supports him/her.
4/ Method selection	The presenter chooses a concrete form of consultation, in line with the key issue, such as focusing on problem solution, change of perspective or sharing own experiences/ colleagues' views.	The presenter chooses the method based on which the problem will be consulted.	The facilitator supports the presenter (or the whole group) in choosing the appropriate method (in line with the key question of the presenter).
5/ Consultation	Consultants express their thoughts, suggestions and experiences within the framework of the case, in line with the chosen method.	The presenter received new stimuli, inspirations, or looked at the problem from a different angle.	The consultants express themselves one by one, the facilitator observes the discussion but does not interfere. The person taking minutes documents the main ideas of the consultation.
6/ Conclusion	The presenter gives a summary of what his/her take-away from the consultation is whereby he/she summarizes the main ideas that were most helpful.	Summary, evaluation, and conclusion of the consultation.	The presenter thanks the consultants, summarizes the results of the consultation, and closes the meeting. The person taking minutes hands over the record to the presenter so that he/she can continue to work with it if necessary.

Consultant as a coach

The coach's role is generally to accompany the individual (or team) on the path to the desired, positive change. Coaches are equal partners of their clients, whom they support in finding their visions, goals, as well as procedures, resources, which is necessary to achieve them.

Although the consultant does not provide „real“ coaching when working with educators, it is useful to know at least the basic principles and techniques that support the development of educators with whom he/she works.

In what situations does a consultant take on the role of the coach?

Initial consultations in the educational institution

It often happens that at the beginning of the cooperation, the team leaders do not yet have any concrete idea of what they would like to achieve in their institution through the new project. Thanks to coaching techniques, the consultant can help them set their vision and goals, which will later make it easier for them to do the planning with their colleagues.

Solving difficult situations and problems

Coaching can also be helpful in solving challenging situations, clarifying current challenges, or setting priorities for mutual work when implementing a project. The consultant in the role of the coach helps educators to identify their own strategies for solving problems and their subsequent implementation into practice (e.g., conflicts in the team, lack of time to complete project tasks, overwhelmed team leader/educator, loss of personal motivation, etc.).

Promoting learning from experience

We all learn in different ways. Coaching enables individual support of a person, through the reflection of his or her own experience and its subsequent use in future situations (to increase the effectiveness of their activities). Coaching questions can also be used for continuous or final reflection of the project with educators.

Basic attitudes in coaching

- I am OK - you are OK (we omit any kind of assessment. We also perceive ourselves with our imperfections),
- Positive approach (we focus on how it would work, how could we succeed in it, instead of how it would not work, that it seems impossible to do, etc.),
- Focus on the future (coaching does not deal with the past, but with the future, we can possibly take from the past what worked),
- Focus on action (at the end of the coaching session, the coachee should tell himself/herself what he/she will do, what his/her next steps will be),
- Everyone is unique (respect for individuality - what I think may not what the coachee thinks).

Examples of coaching techniques

GROW – conversation method with open questions, comprising four basic stages:

1. **G – Goals:** defining short-term and long-term goals
2. **R – Reality:** research of the current situation (circumstances of the problem)
3. **O – Options:** identification and evaluation of various action strategies
4. **W – Will:** preparing the next steps (and their deadlines)

The conversation can be initiated at any stage of the GROW method. The educator - now as a „coachee“ - can start by naming what he/she would like to achieve in the project (Goal), describing the situation or the problem he/she needs to solve currently (Reality), indicating the possibilities for improvement of the situation (Options), or directly by outlining an action plan (Will).

If you have no experience with a coaching interview yet, you can use the so-called GROW “cheat sheet”, describing the individual stages, including questions to focus on.

The GROW technique (“Cheat sheet”)

G - Questions for setting goals

An important part of the coaching interview is to define the goals that our client - educator wants to achieve in the project. Setting goals will allow us to get a realistic view of what is achievable in the given situation and why.

- *What is today's consultation topic?*
- *What would you like to achieve within the given topic?*
- *What would you like to leave the meeting with today?*
- *What is the broader context of the topic?*
- *What is the main aspect (of a given problem, situation etc.)?*
- *What do you see, feel, hear when you imagine you have reached the goal (that it is solved)?*
- *How do you know you have reached it (what will be happening, or what will change)?*
- *When do you want to reach the given goal? (timeframe, e.g., until the end of the month)*
- *What influence do you have on your goal? (on a scale of 1 to 10)*
- *How big a challenge is your goal for you? (on a scale of 1 to 10)*
- *How much do you want to reach it? (on a scale of 1 to 10)*
- *Is your goal positively formulated?*
- *And what do you really want?*

R – Questions for the analysis of current situation

In the description and analysis of the current situation, it is possible to achieve the greatest possible degree of objectivity without personal opinions, expectations, emotions, or prejudices. Examine the problem by asking the educator to describe how he/she perceives it from his perspective. This is an important step that is often neglected. However, if we act, we will gain important information that will help us in resolving the problem.

- *What is currently happening? (Try to be specific and describe the situation in as much detail as possible – what, where, when, who, how much, how often...)*
- *Who specifically has influence on the given situation? (directly or indirectly)*
- *What have you tried already? What effect did it have?*
- *What are the main obstacles for further progress?*
- *What is it that you do to prevent the situation from getting even worse? (Here we focus on resources as this might help to support the client directly)*
- *How are you feeling/are not feeling right now?*
- *What is most important right now? (reduction, sequence, focus on that which is crucial)*

O – Questions about current solution possibilities

After examining the current situation with the educator, look at its solution possibilities. Help him/her to determine his/her own practices which will be used to achieve the goal.

Try to list together all the options that come to mind when looking for a solution to a given situation. You can use brainstorming or mind maps. At this point, do not worry about whether they will work. It is important to create the longest list possible from which you will later select the useful options.

- *What are your possible solution options (variants)?*
- *What can you do?*
- *What else? (We encourage the coachee, we are patient while waiting for the answers, we leave him/her enough space to think)*
- *What would your friend, colleague, neighbour, your older, more experienced "self"? (reversed perspective)*
- *What will not lead to the goal? ("inside-out" brainstorming)*
- *Who should know about it (what persons)?*
- *What else can you try?*
- *What are the possible gains and losses resulting from the selected solution option?*

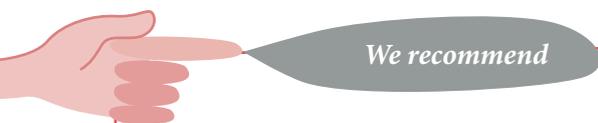
W – Questions about action steps

What will you do and when? In the last stage, we come to concrete steps to achieve a goal. We use questions that will help the educator to clarify his/her own procedure (within his/her current possibilities), to the slightest detail possible.

At this point the educator usually has no idea how he/she could achieve his/her goal. However, it is important that we (albeit with good intentions) do not give him/her our own thoughts or instructions on what the path to the solution might look like. We would deprive him/her of an important skill, namely the responsibility for solving the problem independently and leading the project in his/her educational institution in general (including all the circumstances that the project brings along with it).

- *What exactly will you do?*
- *When (will you start/begin to do it)?*
- *How can it help with achieving your goal?*
- *What could threaten achieving your goal? (risks of the action)*
- *How will you overcome it?*
- *What support will you need?*
- *From whom?*
- *How much do you want to do it (solve it)? (on a scale from 1 to 10)*

The questions (or their order) have not yet turned anyone into a perfect coach. Like all other methods, this one requires some practice. At the beginning, you may feel you are asking questions in a slightly „robotic“ manner. No need to worry, the unnatural feeling will eventually disappear. It is the principal challenge for a consultant in the coaching role - to ask questions and with their help lead the gradually coached educator to independence, to find his/her own solutions and procedures.



We recommend

- Prepare the questions in advance and on your way to the meeting go over them again.
- Keep in mind that in coaching open-ended questions are used
- Use positive, future-oriented questions and range (in line with coachee's needs and to the extent it is achievable for him/her).
- The so-called „miracle questions“:
 - When the educator complains how awful it all is – How do you do it that it is not getting worse?
 - When the educator - even after much thought - cannot find a solution. Imagine that a miracle has happened, and you already have the support of the management for it... (room for educator's idea) ... How did you do it?... This technique keeps the coachee focused on desired goal and evokes positive images of the future.
- „I don't know“, is not an answer, rather it is avoiding it. Give the educator you work with enough time to think not only about what he/she does not know yet, but also about what he/she already knows...
- Think of additional questions after the client has given an answer: What else?
- Do not try to use all the questions at all costs, or their exact wording - in a „forceful“ way. Choose those that seem most useful for the situation. Use your own language. Try to be as present as possible, here and now with the coachee, and the questions will come naturally „out of the blue“.

Consultant as a lecturer

Occasionally, the consultant also takes over teaching activities directly in an educational institution. It is beneficial to anticipate this in advance and be ready to carry out (on request) workshops, seminars, or lessons for educators, according to the current needs of the institution.

In what situations does a consultant take on the role of the lecturer?

- **At the beginning of collaboration** – education or the „introductory seminar“, focused on introducing the methodology to a new team of educators.
- **During project implementation stage** – depending on the needs of the institution (specific lessons or workshops for educators based on the current situation and the need for methodological support).

It is of benefit to realize that lecturing has its specifics (based on goals, target group, environment), which must be considered in the preparation phase. At the beginning, it is good to clarify the so-called „cooperation agreement“ (ideally with a team leader who knows what needs the participants have), goals and type of educational event, choose an appropriate educational method, as well as the method for evaluation. As part of the preparation and implementation of various educational activities, you can also use the proposal in the table.

How to design and implement an educational activity (Proposal)

1/ Analysis of educational needs

Although we usually know our target group, it is a good idea to start the preparation by answering the following questions:

- *What should be the goal of an educational activity?*
- *Are the participants familiar with the topic, or is it completely new to them?*
- *What drives them to educate themselves? Did they choose it themselves or did I select it for them? Did somebody else select it (management)?*
- *How many participants will take part, what do they already know and what are their needs?*
- *What are the conditions in terms of space, timetable, and material for the educational activity?*
- *Will I be lecturing on my own or will I be working in tandem with another person?*
- *What type of educational activity is it going to be (a seminar, a lecture, a training, a workshop...)?*

2/ Setting a goal for educational activity

It is useful to be prepared and know precisely, what the goal of the given educational activity/solution is. In principle, a clear goal defines the path between the current state and the desired state that is to be achieved.

For instance, completing the following sentence can help us design a clear and specific goal: *My educational activity/solution (workshop, seminar, course...) is for (who...), and it will teach them (what...), so they could do (specify what...)*

3/ Building a scenario

- When considering design, we make sure that the programme is sufficiently varied (alternation of various methods – e.g., lecture, presentation, group work, individual work...). The programme should gradually be gaining momentum as well.
- We start out with basic and simple information. In the middle of the programme, we deliver the most substantial aspects and the main body of content, and at the end we recap, repeat, reflect, consolidate, and reflect.
- Working with time:
 - We consider what will happen when and divide the educational activity in question into several blocks of time. Ideally, we write down estimated time for each part that we think is suitable.
 - In the total time allowance it is necessary to include: a few introductory words, introducing of participants, an icebreaker and adequate time for reflecting on the given block.
 - Breaks are a part of the program. We set sufficient time for these too.

4/ Implementation

Introduction

- Introduction of the educator and participants
- Expectations of participants
- Reminder of the goals and topics of the meeting
- Time frame of the meeting and mutual agreement on the completion time (it is useful to calculate beforehand with a shortened scenario, in case the participants need to leave early)
- Setting mutual rules of behaviour and communications during activity

Core

- We stick to our pre-designed scenario and keep in mind the time dedicated to each block.
- It does happen that some of the topics require more time. In other instances, it may become obvious that the selected method was not entirely ideal (lecturing or educating is indeed a very „agile process“, and even though we are well prepared and have a lesson plan, it is not guaranteed that things will always go smooth).
- We try to be sensitive to the needs of the group and respond to them accordingly, perhaps at the cost of deviating from the original scenario (one of the most important and perhaps the most difficult of skills in lecturing).
- It is necessary to constantly assess whether what is currently happening is beneficial for participants and whether it is in line with the goals of teaching/learning.

Conclusion

- Summary of the implemented contents – we briefly summarize the contents of individual blocks, their focus, and key points. We make sure participants understood each part/block and where necessary (and there is time for it) we add needed information. Or else, it is agreed that the additional materials will be sent to participants.
- Assessment of the activity – we should never forget to reflect on educational activity. The assessment is related to goal we want to achieve and to participants' expectations – whether they were met or not. We shall discuss with participants what they have realistically learned and what is their take-away from the meeting (see also specific reflection techniques in the handbook „Průručka pre vzdelávateľov: Ako na service learning v tíme“ [Handbook for educators: how to implement service learning in a team])

Problem situations that may occur and their solutions

Participant fatigue

It is important for the lecturer to be sensitive to the energies of both the group and the individuals. As part of the prevention against fatigue (usually, for instance, after a long lesson full of new information), it is appropriate to alternate between different forms of teaching and include activating methods, **the „energizers“ or „activators“**.

By „energizers“ we mean small games, ideally those which include participants to get up from their chairs and move. They help not only to keep participants focused, but also maintain good atmosphere in the group. They are a fun thing to do, encourage team thinking, strengthen reciprocity among participants, and their memory footprint.

However, beware of „self-serving“ use of games. We must always have an entirely clear idea of what activity we incorporate in the course and why, what do we aim to achieve with it, so that we do not „slip“ into „chaos“, inconsistent list of games, or irritate some participants by „just playing“ with them and not teaching them enough.

Problem participants

In case there is a person participating in the educational activity who is dissatisfied with how the program is progressing, or expresses his/her disagreement with the content, criticizes or tries to disrupt the program, or does not participate or wants to leave prematurely (using various excuses), we can solve such situations in the following ways:

Prevention

- set the rules right at the beginning of the meeting and follow them,
- ensure that all participants are familiar with the rules, content of the program and objectives,
- ask participants about their own expectations, about what they would like to take away with them (should this not be part of the program, try to include it on an „ad hoc“ basis or communicate the possibilities of including it),
- we try to find balance between the needs of all participants and retaining the original goals of educational activity.

During educational activity

If there is a „collision“ during an educational activity, we can refer to the rules that were pre-set (e.g., „If I criticize, I do so constructively“, „I express myself respecting others“, „I am ok, you are ok“, etc.). Should a participant repeatedly disrupt the proper course of the activity, we can discuss his/her problems individually in the time that is appropriate for it - e.g., during a break when everyone else is working on some assignment.

Good practices for an educator:

- not to take things personally,
- to think positively,
- to be solution-oriented

If we ourselves become the „target“ of verbal attacks, we try not to take any of what is said personally. Even if someone points out our mistake, let us thank them for it. If we are confronted with a different point of view, we should try to recognize the differences of opinion and thank the person for providing a different perspective. In any case, we try to avoid an argument - that would be counterproductive.

If this does not help to resolve the conflict, we try to quiet it down at the very beginning or reframe it in a positive way. It is important to communicate and be open to finding a solution together - either individually with the participant or within the whole group.

In an individual interview we can use the following scheme: „Approach – Topic – Result“

Example: What is your problem? How can I help you with it?

Depending on the situation, an option would be to have the participant involved as a lecturer or agree on another option. We explain to the participant that it is our interest to get to a mutual result (solution), but we also explain to him/her that we currently have only limited options (whether in terms of time, programme, competence, etc.).

In this way, we can quiet down negative emotions, but at the same time, we should be careful not to succumb to them anyway. We can also look for a solution together with a group of other participants, if there is an interest and will to do so. In the worst-case scenario (last option), we suggest to the participant to leave the seminar (course, workshop, or other type of class) so as not to disrupt the atmosphere and our timetable.

Consultant as a mentor

Mentoring is a professional relationship between two people, in which the mentor passes on his/her long-term experience and knowledge to a mentee. Consultants often combine their coaching and mentoring skills to support educators, and, in both cases, similar rules apply.

The GROW method also works in mentoring. So do active listening and open-ended questions, by which the mentor brings his/her mentee to the clear understanding of the current situation.

In case of mentoring, unlike coaching, it is ok when the mentor helps the educator to find possible solutions and gives him/her a helping hand where he/she asks for it (e.g., he offers his prepared materials for use, he shares proven solutions that helped him/her in a similar situation, or he/she will participate in the event as a co-author or co-lecturer of the lesson). The principle of a safe environment and a non-directive approach prevails.

Key skills in mentoring

Active listening

Active listening is a basic skill in mentoring. It not only allows building a confidential relationship with the „mentee“, but it also creates a positive, accepting environment that facilitates open communication. Based on active listening, we find out what does interest the educator, as well as what his/her needs are.

Pillars of active listening:

- Show interest in what your mentee - educator talks about and reflect on important aspects of what has been said, so that you can show and confirm each other's understanding.
- Use body language (eye contact) to indicate that you are paying attention to what the person is describing. Avoid your own experiences or advices until the educator is given enough space to explain his or her own situation, questions, and intent.

Goal setting and skills development

It is important that the mentor has sufficient experience in the field in which he or she works with the educator. Sharing one's own stories in achieving similar goals helps. Help can also be offered in other ways (directly or indirectly), e.g., in helping the educator to find relevant resources (related to staff, methodology, information, support questions...), as well as offering support to develop educator's own responsibility.

Encouragement and inspiration

The ability to encourage and „kick-start“ an educator is one of the consultant's biggest challenges as a mentor.

Suggestions on how to support the educator in his own development:

- Appreciate continuously his/her results and efforts.

- Communicate trust in the educator and his or her ability to grow and progress.
- Respond to his/her frustration with words of support, understanding and appreciation (sometimes just the information that someone else has overcome a similar problem can be helpful). Describe the experiences of others, the mistakes and successes that have happened on their way to success and fulfilment of goals.
- Share inspirational examples of others to motivate.

Beware of „advising questions“

Whether we are in the position of coach or mentor, let us not forget that our main goal is to support educators in their own development and in gaining new experience.

In some situations, however, it can be difficult for us to „hold back“ and not give our „great“ advice, especially when educators are dealing with a problem, we have extensive experience with.

Here, too, the simple constructionist principle applies that what one comes up with on his/her own is much more important to him/her than a ready-made solution or advice. Therefore, let us try to pay attention to the so-called „**advising questions**“, which is something between an advice and a question (*Do you not see that it will not work? What if you tried this, for example? It looks like the goal would need some adjustment, wouldn't it? Why do you want to go for this solution, not the other one?*).

Sometimes educators ask for advice directly. In such case, of course, we provide them with it, but we should always try to leave the final decision up to them. Alternatively, we can explain what we would do in their place. And beware of the forbidden phrase „*You must...*!“

Other necessary skills of a consultant

In this section, we present selected techniques that were important especially when implementing programs in schools.

In addition to the above procedures, consultants sometimes use other important skills in collaboration with educational institutions, e.g., in the field of communication, continuous documentation or evaluation of project results. In this section, we present selected techniques that were important especially when implementing programmes in schools.

Creating a safe environment

One of the important components of successful cooperation with schools is having good personal relationships with teachers. Relationships at a workplace alone do not suffice in building trust and a safe environment. We, therefore, try to act rather informally, authentically, with a real interest in mutual understanding. The friendly atmosphere will help us break down barriers that may sometimes be present at first meetings or later, in more challenging or „tense“ situations.

In building a safe environment the following components have long proved successful:

- **To set communication rules in advance.** It is useful to agree with the team-leader of the teachers' team, as well as the whole team, how you would address each other (we generally suggest addressing others by their first names) and set the rules for communication.
- **To create an informal environment.** We recommend that you agree with the team-leader of the teachers' team on a small snack that you will prepare together or by rotation.
- **Not forgetting the personal dimension.** Start the meeting with a debate on how teachers are, what is new. Teachers usually like to talk, take on personal topics, and listen to stories from colleagues they usually do not have time for. It is important to leave room for a „free“ discussion, but at the same time not to forget to keep an eye on agreed tim-

ing. It is ideal to clarify at the beginning of each meeting what your time options are and then follow the discussion.

- **Active listening and interest in the needs of head teachers.** What would help teachers at present to teach better, or to decide on trying new techniques, etc.

- **Regular support of teachers in what they do.** Rewarding their efforts. Teachers are often underappreciated for their efforts, with various doubts about their own initiatives or activities.

- **Do not put pressure on teachers, do not try to get them out of their comfort zone too soon.** Let us not forget that only after building mutual trust are teachers willing to receive feedback from us, accept suggestions, or accept us as an observer of their lesson. We support teachers in their own development, implementing new ideas and decisions.

On the contrary, what disrupts safe environment:

- Rating and labelling: *“He/she is a slacker!”*
- Lecturing others (being an expert on other people’s circumstances/situation): *“Be careful what you do, say, etc.”*
- The so-called fortune-telling: *“Perhaps you are doing this to me deliberately!”*
- Preaching the only truth and denying the worldviews of others: *“It certainly wasn’t like that, so you didn’t mean it, you wanted to achieve this and that...”*
- Denying emotions: *“Don’t take it that way...”*
- Irony, sarcasm or raising one’s voice.

Providing feedback

Feedback is a piece of information that contains a view, an opinion of a phenomenon or behaviour. It flows from one person to the next. Feedback should be given on request or at least agreed upon by the recipient concerned. We give it to teachers for their work on the project, and we demand it from them for our work.

In collaboration with the team of teachers, we use feedback regularly, most often on the mutual process of preparation, implementation of learning (individual teaching activities), or in the overall development process (key steps) within the project, etc. We can provide teachers with it regarding the aspects they choose, or where we consider important, taking into consideration the pre-designed safe environment we have with the team.

Feedback is an important part of the reflection process, and collegial support will not do without it. However, for most teachers, this topic is new, and its adoption is linked to a safe team environment. It is good to use it gradually. It works well when, for instance, one of the teachers organizes an „open lesson“ or a „custom lesson“ for the other members of the team and the consultant or an authorized colleague will then give him/her feedback. It sets a clear goal in advance - the „demand“ specifying what to give feedback on, and criteria on which to focus.

Feedback process:

appreciation → correction

We start with an empathic expression, pointing out the problem, followed by finding a possible solution with an active approach of the recipient (teacher). The use of descriptive language is a prerequisite for effective feedback.

Rules for providing feedback:

- Feedback should be given when it is requested. It is most effective when the person in question cares about it and requires it. The person concerned should at least agree to it.
- Choose the right time and place. Providing feedback requires at least basic privacy and sufficient time.
- Try to provide as much specific information as possible, not general information. Describe what you noticed in a particular situation, do not generalize your findings.

- Pay attention to completeness, honesty. Include all your reactions to the behaviour of others, including how you felt at the time.
- Do not forget about balance. Do not focus within the given description of the situation only on what caused complications or problems. Both positive and negative aspects are usually present in every action.

Rules for receiving feedback:

- Listen actively. Carefully perceive and remember the received information (it is advisable to record it in writing).
- Make sure that you understand correctly what has been said. Based on open-ended questions, review information that is not clear. Alternatively, ask for other important information or examples of similar behaviour.
- Do not defend yourself. It is easy, but usually not useful, to start explaining why I did it this way.
- Reserve the right to evaluate. It is necessary to allow enough time to think about the information and critically evaluate whether it is important for us to change some aspects of our behaviour.
- Say thank you. Honest and correct feedback is a useful gift for us, for which it is right to thank, even though negative points may have prevailed in it.

Solving difficult situations using the so-called non-violent communication (based on support given to the team of teachers at school)

When communicating sensitive or demanding topics with the head teacher, the team of teachers, or students, we can use the principles of non-violent communication. It is an empathetic way of expressing one's feelings and needs, the aim of which is to strive for mutual understanding and to find a mutually satisfactory solution.

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a process developed by Marshall Rosenberg in the 1960s. It is based on two basic assumptions:

- All people can empathize with others (empathy)
 - People resort to violence and verbal aggression only if they see no other means to meet their needs.
- On the contrary, if they manage to express their needs, harmony can be observed between the communicators.

According to these hypotheses, what people do are „only“ attempts to fulfil their, often hidden, needs. For the development of communication strategies, it is, therefore, necessary to identify one's (often) hidden needs, the needs of others, and to be able to express the feelings associated with these needs.



The table below describes the four-step process of nonviolent communication:

4 steps of nonviolent communication according to Marshall Rosenberg

1/ Observation without evaluation	<p>The first step is a descriptive expression of what we see, that is, an observation, as opposed to an evaluative statement, through which we often let out some of our hidden emotions: „You're crazy“ or „You're so clever“.</p> <p>On the contrary, descriptive expression helps us to name what we see, hear, etc. Sometimes a descriptive statement may sound rather bookish, but all you must do is add more description. Instead of a (normal) evaluation statement such as „You drive like a jerk“, we can express ourselves descriptively, e.g., „You're going really fast.“</p>
2/ Recognizing and naming of one's own feelings	<p>Many people are not able to name their feelings precisely, and most importantly, we are not used to dealing with this problem in communication at all. We lack the necessary vocabulary. We usually make do with feelings of joy, sorrow, anger. However, feelings can be more complex than helplessness, hope, loneliness, overwhelming, surprise, confusion, frustration, embarrassment, etc.</p> <p>Perception of feelings is like a led control in a car - feelings indicate the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of some of our needs and it is therefore useful to deal with them, name them and try to name them in other people, empathize with them, be empathetic. Be careful not to slip into adding different thoughts and our own interpretations when expressing feelings: „I feel it's right“, „I feel manipulated“, etc.</p>
3/ Recognizing and naming of needs (which are hidden under the feelings)	<p>Naming needs tends to be even more difficult. We do not perceive a need as something we need externally - to be quiet, to go to a place with someone, and so on. The need is understood as a matter of our interior, the fulfilment of which we are responsible. But that does mean we do not have it. It would be, for instance, the need for security, fairness, order and more.</p> <p>When expressing our needs, we are not to add concrete attempts/requests to meet these needs, as that would resemble manipulation - e.g., „I need you to understand me now.“</p>
4/ Nonviolent expression of suggested „wishes“ for the future	<p>The last step is to express what I need, an appeal. It is important that this statement is really an appeal and not an order, which may not be recognizable at first glance by the structure of the sentence, but by how we react when the other person rejects us.</p> <p>An appeal can always be rejected. An important criterion for an appeal is „feasibility“ thereof for the other person. E.g., the request: „Could you now fulfil the task from the worksheet without talking?“ is much more conceivable than: „Could you stop angering me or stop bothering me?“</p>

Nonviolent communication is just one of many communication strategies for dealing with challenging situations. We recommend that you explore other techniques and put them into practice, at your own discretion.

5/ Introduction of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support

As we have already suggested, collegial support is a well-thought-out collaboration (beforehand) of close colleagues, i.e., educators, who exchange useful experiences, skills and inspire each other.

In collaboration with educational institutions, the support of external consultants has long proved successful. Consultant as a well-informed assistant or so-called „Critical Friend“ accompanies educators in their mutual implementation of a new project. Although he/she never participates in collegial support directly, he/she leads individual teams to the acquirement of new skills and techniques. He/she does not assess what is happening in the institution but observes whether the project is implemented efficiently. He/she always tries to respond to the needs of educators and actions the necessary and proven steps.

Four stages of implementation of service learning based on collegial support from the point of view of a consultant:

1. **Preparation stage**
2. **Planning stage**
3. **Implementation stage**
4. **Reflection and evaluation stage**

During the process, the consultant and the involved institutions go gradually through initial technical (administrative) particularities of the project, initial analysis, vision and formation of specific goals, and the actual implementation (methodology) and final evaluation.

In the next chapter, we will focus on how the implementation of service learning programmes using the model of collegial support in educational institutions is followed through. We will be drawing on the experience of consultants, gained through collaboration with teachers in schools, within the project Educational Leaders in Education for Sustainable Development. Each stage (in addition to the description of individual steps) contains also brief records of consultants from the given period of collaboration with the team leader or other project participants.

1/ The preparation stage

Reaching out and recruitment of institutions for collaboration

Before commencing the selection of educational institutions for our project, let us try to consider which of those we already know are in the given (related) area or could be interested in collaborating on our project. We then contact the selected institutions with a concrete offer.

It usually helps to focus on the following prerequisites when choosing these:

- Profiling or active interest of the institution in the field of education for sustainable development and teamwork of educators.
- Educators' interest in developing new skills in the given field.
- Possibilities of long-term cooperation with the institution.
- Supporting the management of the institution, meeting the needs of its employees in the project activities.

Here are some useful tips for the selection process:

- Enthusiastic educators are the foundation of success. So, let us start with those. Ideally, we get in touch directly with the educator - a potential team leader who might be willing to get involved in the project. We send him/her basic information and arrange an informal interview, during which basic points of the project and the current possibilities of the institution are discussed. This way we will find out whether the institution would be suitable for collaboration. Below are some examples of questions for an introductory interview with a team leader:

- *Do you think that the area of sustainable development is important for contemporary education?*
- *Would you like to work with your colleagues on a joint educational project?*
- *Do you have any colleagues who would be willing to take part in such a programme with you? Do you have any common topics that you would like to share together during lessons?*
- *Is the management of your institution supportive of such endeavours and would it be in favour of such collaboration?*

If the educator's answer is "yes" to the above questions, our collaboration can begin. If he/she lingered over any of the questions or answered "no", we recommend reconsidering the necessary preconditions. In some cases, it may not be the right time to start such a project and it will be more feasible to focus on another institution where the conditions will be more favourable.

- If we are unable to obtain contacts directly with the educators, we can start the selection process directly in a "formal way", via an email sent to the institution's management. It is ideal to prepare the "info package" with all the information that our project (educational programme) offers, what are its expectations, benefits for participants, etc.
- We then agree on introductory consultations with the institutions that show interest, during which we will already take a detailed look at the implementation options and determine our "collaboration agreement" (see below).

Introductory consultations

Initially, it is important to present the content of the project to the respective institutions and to clarify mutual expectations. On the one hand, there are our goals and offer, on the other hand, there are specific conditions of educational institutions, the ideas of principals and individual educators.

It is common for institutions to have rather vague expectations at first. These we try to transform into a specific agreement established through consultations. It is important that the consultant, by forming a vision (coaching questions, visualization, etc.), leads the team leader of educators to what he/she wants to achieve in his/her work on the project (together with colleagues), what interests him/her most and motivates him/her. After forming the initial vision, we continue with the input analysis (SWOT), which will help team leaders to clarify what are the conditions (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks) and the true possibilities of her/his institution within the project.

The conditions in institutions tend to be diverse. It is advisable to be prepared for individual adjustment of collaboration and compromises, taking into consideration the needs of educators or other participants (e.g., limited time possibilities of educators, specific focus of the institution). We always try to meet the needs, of course it is necessary to adhere to a certain time and methodological framework of project activities.

Before starting the collaboration, we must sign an agreement with the management of the institution, or with the team leader (memorandum, contract, etc.), which will comprise all the discussed rules and conditions of collaboration.

We recommend maintaining regular contact with the management of the institution from the beginning of the collaboration (in line with the agreement), informing it about the current situation and cultivating good relations. Management support is one of the fundamental prerequisites for a successful and long-term collaboration.



Fig. Initial consultations with teachers in the tea room. Source: Roots & Shoots Slovakia

Checklist for initial consultations

- Introduction of project goals and content
- Mutual creation of the team leader's vision - in accordance with the objectives of the project (we can use coaching techniques (see chapter „Consultant as a coach“)
- Initial analysis (SWOT) - reveals the possibilities of implementing the methodology in the educational programme of the institution, the involvement of other colleagues or the external community (SWOT form - see Handbook for educators: how to approach service learning in a team)
- “Preparing the agreement/contract – it is the key moment of this particular stage. It consists of mutual fine-tuning of how the cooperation will be realized between the team leader of educators and the consultant (expectations, roles, and responsibilities)
- Preliminary cooperation plan (i.e., description of vision, goals, estimated time allocation for meetings and activities, possible other needs – e.g., training and skills development of the team)

If there is not enough time to shape a vision or a detailed analysis of the conditions in one meeting, it is in order. There is no need to „force“ it. We can easily adjust this with the team leader during the preparation process, or later, at the planning meeting of the team of educators, in the presence of all involved. It is advisable not to underestimate the preparation and to devote enough time to this initial step, to think carefully about what the institution is interested in and capable of achieving in the suggested timeframe.



Our recommendation

Let us pay attention to what vision we create and whose vision it is - is it the vision of educators or that of the management? To what extent are our thoughts reflected in it (those that were outlined when the project was presented)? We make sure it is a long-term vision that applies to the methodology of your educational programme.

“ In the preparatory phase, first, a meeting with the head of the teaching team worked out for me (two meetings in person, which was a little more time consuming), and subsequently meeting the team. These face-to-face meetings were of great importance because there was plenty of time and space for dialogue, for asking basic questions and mapping the real situation at school. The goal (and partial goals) was set with the entire team afterwards. We agreed to meet with the teachers in person one day a month, except in December, which is generally shorter and more demanding due to longer holidays. Otherwise, we agreed to communicate via email and sometimes over the phone. ”

“ I think it was good to arrange the first meeting early enough so that there was some time between the initial consultations and the start of the project. At the very beginning, the main purpose of the meeting is to get to know each other with the teachers. Therefore, it may be useful to arrange an informal meeting (say, in a cafe). The second meeting (in the preparatory stage) is more about technical issues, where we should allow enough time to discuss the structural issues, timing, teaching team and project content. It is also crucial that the selection of education field is in line with the school curriculum. The most important thing that is important to address at the beginning is, in my experience, the time factor combined with the capabilities of all members of the team of teachers. Further, teachers are pleased about getting a minute after every meeting. I think it gives them a sense of organization and structure. ”

Team education

At the beginning of the collaboration, the educators often have no or limited experience with the innovative methodology that we bring to the institution. It does happen that - since our last collaboration - the educators who previously ran the programme at the institution have been replaced, and it is necessary to reacquaint them with the content and procedures.

Before starting the collaboration, we recommend (based on the given situation) to implement the so-called Introductory seminar for educators, which will offer them a better picture of what education and collegial support entail, ideally with practical demonstrations of main activities.

The introductory seminar takes place mostly in the institution. It is a half-day or full-day activity, according to the needs of educators. As part of the preparation of the team for the implementation of the service learning model (through the procedures of collegial support), we offer the following structure, which proved to be helpful to us during the implementation of Roots & Shoots programme.

As the conditions in educational institutions often vary, it is necessary to consider the experience of educators with the methodology. When designing a „tailor-made“ seminar, the sub-chapter „*Consultant as a lecturer*“ can also be of help. In it, you can find ideas on how to proceed with the preparation and implementation of various educational activities.

Content of the introductory seminar for educators of service-learning programmes in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (proposal based on experience with the Roots & Shoots programme version for primary and secondary schools)

<p>1/ General characteristics of the field of Education for Sustainable Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic terminology (concept of sustainability, Agenda 2030 and Objectives of sustainable development, Environmental education vs. Education for sustainable development) • Starting points, principles, and goals of Education for sustainable development • Key themes and approaches of Education for sustainable development
<p>2/ Education for sustainable development using the service learning model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting points, principles, and regularities of the educational model • Experiential learning and Kolb's learning cycle • Reflection within experiential learning (principles, types, and possibilities of using reflection in teaching)
<p>3/ Introduction of the Roots & Shoots teaching model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Goodall's story and introduction of the Roots & Shoots programme • Roots & Shoots formula - 4-step methodology • Possibilities of implementation of an interdisciplinary programme into the educational programme (curriculum) • Practical demonstrations and workshops in the field, good practice
<p>4/ Collegial support among educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic principles of collegial counselling • Possibilities of using collegial support in education • Introduction of the so-called 3T methodologies (3 x together, i.e., joint planning, joint implementation, joint reflection)
<p>5/ Key competencies and roles of educators in community learning and collegial support/counselling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator as a facilitator: basics of facilitation in the field of participatory education (practical demonstration in practice) • Educator as a coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularities of successful functioning of the team (Adair's circles), • Setting common expectations, rules, vision, and goals (SMART) • working with group dynamics (demonstration of teambuilding activity + reflection)

Other topics to be considered as an addition to education of teams (it depends on the initial analysis and the content of the contract with the institution):

- **Development of skills in the field of peer/collegial support**
 - Balint group and the so-called collegial „peer“ counselling
 - Facilitation of meetings and team meetings
 - Providing feedback
 - Communication techniques in education – active listening, nonviolent communication and more
- **The basics of project management for educators working in the field of service learning (other models of project teaching)**
 - Individual stages of the project cycle - from input analysis to evaluation
 - Options of long-term financing of service learning projects (use of crowdfunding, social media, financial collections, partnerships with companies, etc.)

2/ The planning stage

The planning meeting with the team of educators

After the introductory consultations and the introductory seminar, we can, together with the team of educators, start our joint planning, where we create the so-called **Collaboration plan** (see Handbook for educators: how to approach service learning in a team). Our role as a consultant is now crucial as educators often welcome help with fine-tuning of the initial vision, goals, as well as the overall preparation of a new project.

During the planning meeting, the consultant as a facilitator supports the team of educators in setting their own goals (SMART), outlining the list of specific activities and their outputs, as well as in the appropriate division of individual tasks among the team (i.e., year schedule). It is also useful to provide a list of methods that educators will use, reflecting their motivation, expertise, timetable, or other options.

In the beginning, let us not forget to set a suitable way of measuring the impact concerning the set goals, so that it would suit educators, their way of working and would not impose an excessive burden on them (evaluation questionnaires, interviews or working portfolio - see below). It is also important to have a preliminary schedule of regular meetings with the consultant, as well as the meetings of educators, for the purpose of collegial collaboration.

“ *In advance, the team of teachers prepared their working vision and goals of the project, which we then - including with a framework schedule, activities, indicators, etc. - elaborated at the planning meeting. At the meeting, the schedule of the year was designed in detail for the next quarter and then in a flexible way so it could be supplemented and adjusted according to the development of the project and the situation at the school. I shared the plan of cooperation (after agreement) with the team through our shared Google folder, to which the team leader continuously added new activities and dates. It seemed to all of us as the most practical option. Part of the meeting was also to set the rules of communication for the team by teachers, which resulted from the exercise of us talking about what they prefer when they work with others and what makes their cooperation difficult. In the end, we also briefly discussed the possibilities of motivation, activities that can serve as support for them in difficult moments during the school year.* ”



It is crucial to devote enough time to set goals and to enter the process, say, in the capacity of a coach, to ask about the meaning, to make sure that it is truly everyone's goal. It is necessary to give a lot of support to the head-teacher – he or she is just learning it and solves his/her personal and work-related matters. It is essential to make sure he/she does not feel it is all for to him or her to do. At the beginning, we must intensify communication (personal contact, e-mail, phone). We must listen well to what he/she is telling us and show a great deal of empathy to what we hear from them.



Supporting the team of educators in their joint planning

While the role of the consultant in the initial planning meeting with the educators is indispensable, the consultant's involvement in their joint planning of teaching during the implementation of the project is less intensive.

Other than that, the consultant is used to providing support to educators, for instance, during the launch of the programme in the institution (as a professional lecturer, e.g., via a motivational workshop during the recruitment process of participants or thematic lessons within individual). At the same time, he/she functions as a supporting source of methodological materials, which are highly valued by educators - beginners. It is therefore useful to prepare a reservoir of ideas that we can provide them with, in line with their needs and the current situation in the institution.

Educators are becoming more and more independent and are gradually becoming independent of the consultant. Joint preparation for teaching (hours, lessons, project days, blocks, excursions, etc.) during the implementation of the project takes place mostly independently, in the scenario of regular team meetings.



As consultants we met with all the involved teachers regularly and helped them to plan classes and activities during the whole year. We also tried to be present at all the important steps of the project and even realized workshops with the pupils, to be more involved in the project, to offer to the team of teachers a better support also in the practice.





“ As far as joint lesson planning is concerned, my participation was no longer necessary during the year, as the teachers were satisfied with the given „collaboration plan“, the methodological manual and their own resources. Sometimes it happened that the team leader asked about a technique, or asked for a tip or inspiration, but it was just about little things ”

3/ The implementation stage

At this stage, collaboration with the institutions consists mainly of regular consultations between the consultant and the team leader of educators. Their goal is to support the team leader in his tasks resulting from the process of implementing the methodology of the educational programme and collegial support. As we said in the previous lesson, the consultant has different roles when considering the current needs of the team leader and the situation. Our visit to the institution may also include the teaching - either separately or in collaboration with educators. It would be an addition to the consultation when it comes to the development of the project.

Consultations with team leaders usually take place directly at the institution, ideally in an informal atmosphere (over coffee or with a small reception). It has proved useful to meet at regular intervals (depending on the capabilities of the educators), which allows you to maintain a dynamic of the process. When setting the frequency of consultations, we start from a joint agreement with educators arising from our „contract“ (ideally at least once a month).

It happens that the team of educators is so coherent that they prefer to meet with the consultant together (or at least part of the team). Occasional meetings with the management of the institution, which may take place after consultation, are also important. An opportunity for the involvement of directors is the so-called mid-term evaluations (see next chapter), approximately in the middle of the project period, which serves to evaluate and reflect on previous cooperation.

Again, the rule is that each institution is unique, and it is necessary to keep this in mind during the implementation stage. Some educators may be very independent from the start of the collaboration, while some may require more assistance and support in teaching lessons or deal with ad hoc situations. This means that the consultant is confronted with various scenarios, which require his/her flexibility, sensitivity, and attention to specific situations that may occur.

Continuous consultations

Underestimating **the preparation before the consultations is not advised**. In the meantime, some things may have „dropped out“, or the situation in the institution may have changed. It is usually useful to use and work with the „consultant’s diary“, which will allow us to keep track of the necessary overview of the situation (problems/progress) in respective institutions, even after some time has passed. It is advisable to return to the previous meeting minutes before each consultation or to get in touch with the team leader a few days in advance over the phone and agree on the general content of the consultation. Such a procedure helps to better respond to the current needs of the institution as well as to streamline the consultation process for which there is limited time.

During the consultations, it is appropriate to focus on:

- the current state of the project, a summary of events over time, looking in on important moments or a problem,
- development of the project with regards to the set vision and goals of the team of educators,
- important dates and events for the near future (e.g., to-do-list for the next 1-2 months)

After consultations - As part of the documentation of consultations with educators, it proved to be useful to keep meeting minutes. The consultant’s diary (see below) helps us to direct our attention to what is happening in the educational institution during a particular stage of the project. It can also help us maintain a better continuity of the meetings after some time has passed. We can then make use of it in the final evaluation of the project or in sharing practical examples.

The *consultant’s diary* can be kept in various forms, depending on the nature of the project as well as the type of the institution we work with.

In our case, we focused on five main areas when working with the diary:

- Me and the educational institution
- Me and the team leader (with whom I work)
- Me and the team (which I support in their collegial collaboration)
- Collegial collaboration plan
- Service learning in the field of education for sustainable **development**

Each of the areas contains two columns - one is for descriptive language, objective facts, the other for individual reflection, things you would like to work on as a consultant.

We recommend that you set aside some time after each consultation to write down the key moments (i.e., points from the meeting that we have identified as important for the institution). It is certainly not necessary to fill in all sections of the diary every time. Taking minutes should not become a *mechanistic activity*. We keep in mind that its purpose is to support our work, and the work of our colleagues. We suggest that you only write down the information that is crucial for you now and beneficial for your future practice.

Consultant's diary (example)

Area 1: Me and the educational institution

What type of institution is it? What is management's reaction to this project? Has the institution been involved in our programme in the past? If so, how? What challenges did they encounter? What other information did I find out from our first meetings?

General description (facts, situation, basic features)

My comments, investigation, reflection, recommendations

Area 2: Me and the leader of the team of educators

What communication channels do we use to communicate with the team leader? How often? What is the content of our meetings? What is our contract and how do I support the team leader from the point of view of the contract? What do I need from her/him and vice versa? How do we work with the portfolio? What works/has worked for us in communicating with educators?

General description (facts, situation, basic features)

My comments, investigation, reflection, recommendations

Area 3: Me and the team (which I support in their collegial cooperation)

What is the team like? What are its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities? What are its needs? How can I support them? What problems or challenges does the current team face? What would help it? How do I help the team work better together when looking for a solution? How do meetings progress when I am not present? How do individual educators work together with respect to the principles of collegial support?

General description (facts, situation, basic features)

My comments, investigation, reflection, recommendations

Area 4: Collegiate Collaboration Plan

How was the plan designed? Who was involved? How did the team regard it? During the year, we monitor whether the educators manage to follow the plan, which they determined, whether any adjustments were needed, etc. Were there any problems in completing the specific steps? If so, what helped them? In the final reflection, we will focus on whether the goals were met and what changes they managed to achieve.

General description (facts, situation, basic features)

My comments, investigation, reflection, recommendations

Area 5: Service learning in the field of education for sustainable development

How are educators doing in the development of key competences in the field of education for sustainable development? What works in support of their team? What does not work? What materials were created? What impact do the individual activities within the methodology have on the participants? How is the impact measured/scaled? What experiences do educators gain from teaching/lessons? Our examples of best practices...

General description (facts, situation, basic features)

My comments, investigation, reflection, recommendations

Further support options for a team of educators in their joint learning

- Visits for educational purposes - the consultant can plan and carry out an educational activity for educators (or other participants), in line with the current needs of the institution,
- Tandem teaching - the consultant and the educator give a lesson or a workshop,
- „The custom lessons“ - lesson is led by an educator (or more educators) and the consultant gives feedback on those aspects which are required by the educator(s).

“ During the lessons, our teachers were independent, and our support was not needed. If they needed to consult something, we consulted it operatively, usually by phone or while we were having consultations. They appreciated tips and inspiration for activities, but in most cases, they were alright with a handbook or their own resources. ”

“ During the year we held various workshops supporting the continuous work of individual teachers. It helped us to review specific topics (in the field of sustainable development) and work on them from different perspectives. In addition, attending other teachers' lessons can serve as inspiration for the visiting teacher, and for the class teacher leading the lesson it constitutes an opportunity to get feedback on the applied methods. ”

“ It was rather difficult for teachers to accept someone else in their class. It helps to build a relationship if we make it clear that we do not want to assess them, that it is not a visitation, and has no negative consequences for them whatsoever, that we simply want to help them in their development. Once we succeed in this, teachers see the benefit and are more open. The easiest way is to start with visits to cooperating teachers. The consultants must know precisely how to provide feedback and that the cooperation agreement is clearly defined, they must know what to follow and what to stick to. In no case may he/she give unsolicited good advice, especially without regard to the assignment. One practical advice - if the school principal takes on the role of the team leader, sometimes he/she may conduct meetings in a directive style, i.e., he/she promotes his/her opinions. It did help when the consultant played an active part at the team meeting and facilitated the meeting, trying to give room to everyone, translating what was said and helping the team to come to an agreement. It is as if the need to get to the result at all cost is lifted from one's shoulders, he/she does not „force“ it unnecessarily and is more open to the opinion of others. ”



Measuring impact and work with portfolio

We call it a portfolio, and it is indeed a collection of the project-related, designed, and accumulated material that helps us to measure the project's impact. How such a portfolio should look like or what it should contain should be determined at the discussion with the team leader at the initial consultations (when the method of collaboration is set up) or at the planning meeting with the whole team. Most importantly we should stress to educators the potential and benefits of the portfolio – present it as an opportunity to effectively manage the materials that have been created and accumulated throughout the project (model lessons, worksheets, procedures, meeting records, reviews) and as their own know-how which they can make use of in future (for teaching or to innovate the curriculum). More detailed information on how to create a portfolio can be found in the handbook *Managing Educator Team Collaboration for Service-Learning Projects*.

From the position of consultants, the portfolio should be presented to educators as a proposal rather than a condition, it should be put forward as an opportunity to effectively use the created material and thence also work with it. However, should it impose or be viewed by educators as only imposing an additional administrative burden on them, and thus discourage them from the work on the project itself, then we would do better if we find some more acceptable way or tool, which in the end might too be able to help us to evaluate the project (e.g., through photo gallery, videos of key activities, interviews with participants at the end of the project, etc.)

“ From our experience we suggest creating a photo diary. This keeps both teachers and students motivated. One school for instance had presented a „photo timeline“ in front of the class so everyone could see what was happening in the project. Others wrote articles for school newspapers. The accumulated documents and materials were stored on Google Drive.”

“ The portfolio was a success right from the start. Although the team leader at first feared that it might be just another extra work, in the end she quite enjoyed it and even managed to do it very systematically (she managed to arrange very meaningfully all photos, drawings, materials and the project propositions, created by the student team - drawings, plans, reviews, articles for school magazine or FB Fanpage, video and other contributions to local media, etc.). All this, in the end, proved to be very helpful, especially in the so-called mid-term or final evaluation (when the achievements and the project impact were discussed). This portfolio took a physical form of photodocumentary evidence, and the great thing about is that the students themselves contributed to it. The photo gallery was also shared via Google Drive. We even installed a wall board showing off the project activities on a wall next to the school principal's door, to be seen by other students, parents, or school visitors.”

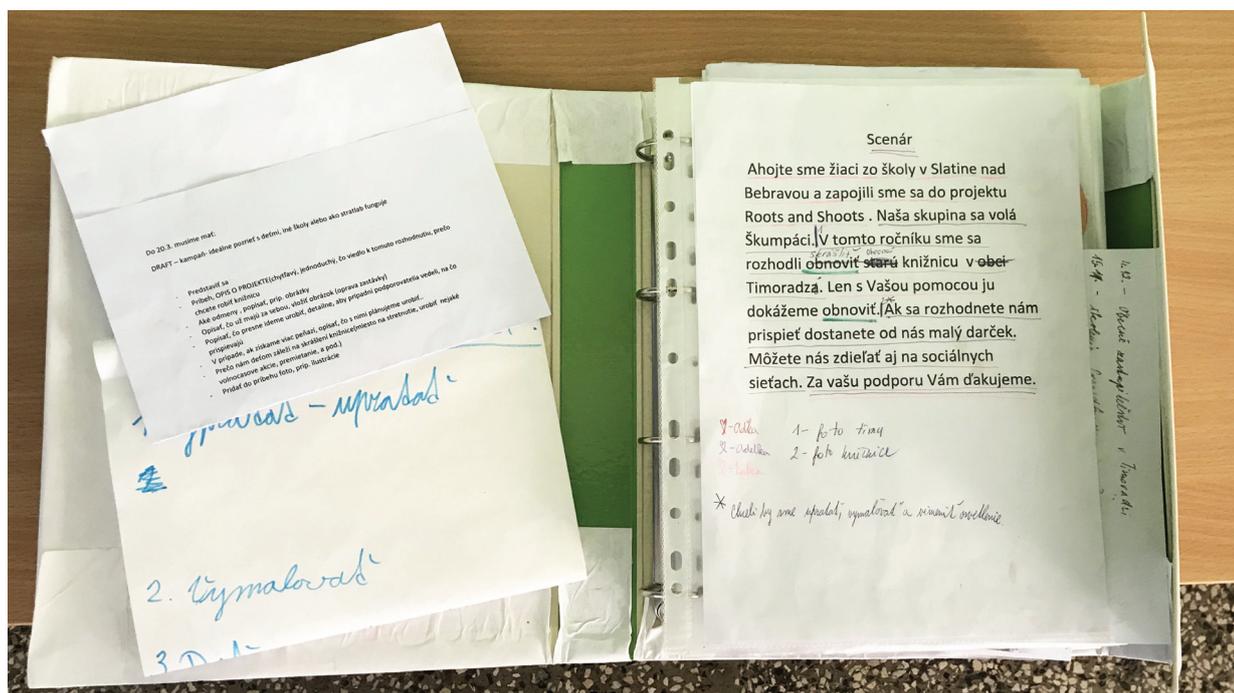


Fig. Portfolio. Source: Roots & Shoots Slovakia

4/ The reflection and evaluation stage

Reflection is a purposeful activity that contributes to personal development of educators and enriches their thinking. Its main purpose is to identify successes and failures and analyse their reasons to give us meaningful lessons for future.

For a consultant, reflection is an essential tool for evaluation of both the educational objectives and the project goals and serves also for evaluation of the teamwork. The mental contemplation of the project is done by us spontaneously and randomly almost every time we meet and talk with the team leader, and possibly with the entire team of educators (such as during occasional talks in between the educational activities). But a more thorough and comprehensive reflection should take place in the middle of the project period – a mid-term reflection, as we call it, when educators and participants shall have already taken the first significant steps, and finally at the end of the project, when our cooperation with the institution basically ends (the final reflection).

As for educators, reflection should be an integral part of their own collegial cooperation, and should be happening after every joint lesson, and it should also be contained in the teaching itself – as a sort of a mental post-processing of just finished activity within the service learning programme.

General framework for the project reflection – the review procedure

- Describe the whole situation: the steps you have taken so far.
- Convey your feelings (emotions): *How did you feel - when was it good, when did you feel uncomfortable? And when did you feel uneasy? Why?*
- *What have you learned? (And have we met your expectations?)*
- *What has worked and should be repeated the same way next time? And what hasn't and should be done differently? And how it should be done?*
- Describe the specific benefits. *What is the lesson learned (from the given experience) and how are you going to utilize it?*

For further methods of the project reflection see the *Educator's Handbook: how to approach service learning in a team*.

Continuous reflection (optional)

We call it mid-term, or an ongoing reflection and it is a way how to assess the progress of the project during its implementation stage, with particular attention put to the set project objectives. It takes place around the middle of the project period, when the teams have already achieved the first key milestones and gathered some new experiences that are good to discuss together. It is focused on the evaluation of the steps taken (completed tasks), as well as on the discussion of the gained experience of educators and participants. It's always good to bring up first some positive aspects in the discussion, but then also tackle the problematic issues and complications which prevented educators from proceeding as planned. Based on the discussion, the team jointly comes to what could be improved in the remaining period and how to proceed further.



Our recommendation

It proved helpful to invite institutional management to this mid-term evaluation. A team meeting with the management involved can be fun and inspiring – but, only if the director is on good terms with the educators and his presence does not stand as a barrier to collective contemplation. In addition to gaining a better insight into the situation, the director can support educators with his/her ideas or solutions to specific situations.

Final reflection

We definitely recommend involving each member of the team, including the institutional management, to what we call the final reflection. It is like the ongoing reflection, but this time we focus on evaluation of the project experience and objectives. It is important that each stakeholder - consultant, team leader, individual educators as well as the institution management – speaks up and say their word at the meeting.

Some of the possible issues to be asked at the final evaluation meeting:

- *To what extent have you succeeded to meet the set project goals?*
- *To what extent have you managed to follow the collegial support (3T) procedures?*
- *How did you manage to apply the principles of service learning?*
- *What worked for you? What has proved to be effective?*
- *On the contrary, what were the troubles? What obstacles did or have you encountered?*
- *How do you evaluate the overall response to the project from the institution management, colleagues, or the external community?*
- *What new questions have emerged in your institution thanks to the project?*
- *How did your personal participation in the project enrich you?*
- *How do you think you are going to use the gained experience?*

Before the end of the final meeting, we are going to discuss with the entire team and the management what our cooperation in future might look like. We will think together about the possibilities of further use of the established methodology and its possible dissemination or sharing with other institutions in the area (such as in a position of a so-called centre of good practice, which will accept visits of educators from other institutions, etc.). And we shall present to institution the possible support from us.



Fig. Evaluation meeting with teachers. Source: Roots & Shoots Slovakia



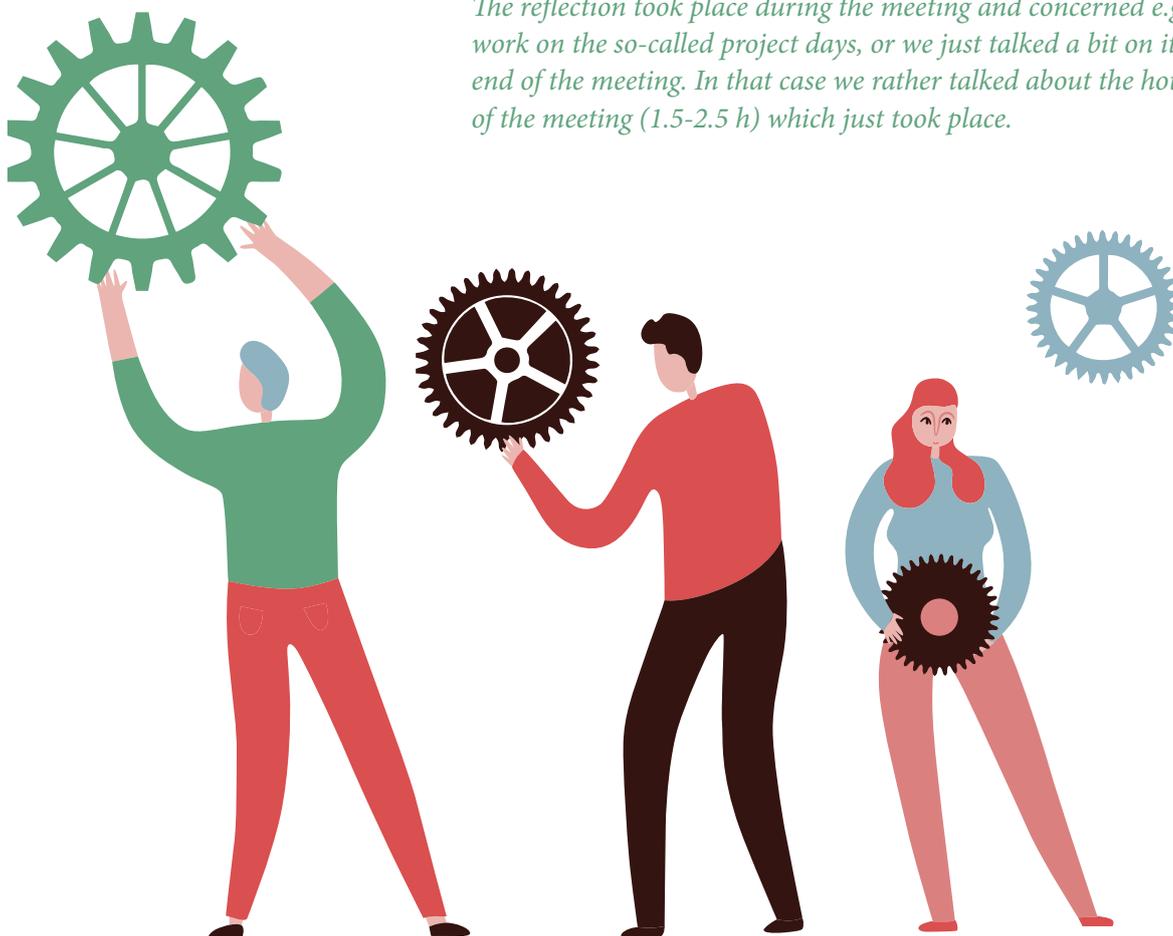
Our recommendations

Prepare some official evaluation (certificate) for the institution (team of educators) for their year-round engagement and cooperation. Most appropriate would be a certificate from the organization responsible for the project.

“ There was a brief reflection in each consultation with the team, when we talked about what they were doing and not doing, what they needed and where they saw room for improvement. In addition, the so-called mid-term reflection, where we focused on the whole team, how their cooperation in the team works, how they perceive our cooperation, what they have managed to achieve so far and what awaits them, with regards to the goals set in the cooperation plan. We also invited the school management to the meeting, which proved to be very successful. The principal made several interesting observations on current problematic situations in the project implementation (lack of time in formal teaching, non-cooperation of other school colleagues ...) and supported the teaching team with its suggestions and possible solutions for the future. ”

“ We tried to talk a bit about the project progress every time when we visited the schools. A deeper reflection on this matter should be done once a month. It makes a difference if you talk in between the lessons or at school or if you plan enough time for reflection. To create a sort of a distance, I suggest meeting outside school, say, in a café, restaurant. ”

“ I reflected on the matters with the whole team and gave feedback at every meeting. I used various methods and tried to change them. The reflection took place during the meeting and concerned e.g., their work on the so-called project days, or we just talked a bit on it at the end of the meeting. In that case we rather talked about the hot issues of the meeting (1.5-2.5 h) which just took place. ”



Four stages of service learning implementation using collegial support from the consultant's point of view (Checklist)

STAGE	ACTIVITY	ROLE OF CONSULTANT
1. PREPARATION	Reaching out and selecting institutions for collaboration	Representative of the institution (coordinator)
	Introductory consultations	Representative of the institution (coordinator), couch
	Team education	Lecturer
2. PLANNING	The planning meeting with the team	Facilitator, couch
	Continuous team support in joint planning	
3. IMPLEMENTATION	Continuous consultations	Variable roles, according to the current needs of the team
	Consultation documentation	
	Meetings to support mutual team learning or other activities per "agreement"	
	Measuring the impact of the project	
4. REFLECTION AND EVALUATION	Continuous reflection (optional)	Facilitator, mentor
	Final reflection and evaluation of the project	Facilitator, mentor, representative of the organisation (coordinator)

MATERIALS / WHAT TO PREPARE

Infopack - information about the project and prerequisites for involvement for educational institutions (in line with the individual needs of the organization in question). Proposed content: description of the project and the offer of the organisation, basic characteristics of the methodology, inspiring materials for study - examples of good practice and interesting outputs.

Materials for conducting a coaching interview and forming a vision - e.g., „GROW technique (cheat-sheet)" (see subchapter „*Consultant as a coach*")

Materials for the implementation of the introductory analysis „SWOT" (see handbook *Managing Educator Team Collaboration for Service-Learning Projects*)

Memorandum of collaboration with the institution/agreement for the educators involved (in line with the needs of the organisation - description of the prerequisites for collaboration)

Consent to disclosure of data, making photos/videos for all participants (in line with the needs of the organisation)

Materials for introductory education - e.g., „**Content of the introductory seminar for educators of service learning programmes in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (proposal based on experience with the Roots & Shoots programme version for primary and secondary schools)**" (see chapter „*Implementation of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support*" - „1/ Preparation Stage")

The Collaboration plan (setting team rules, creating a common vision, SMART goals, and collaboration plan - see the handbook *Managing Educator Team Collaboration for Service-Learning Projects*)

Support with the use of the **Collaboration Plan** and adequate procedures within the „agreement" (see the individual parts in the chapter „*The role and skills of the consultant in supporting educators in the field of service learning*")

Working with the Consultant's diary (see chapter „Implementation of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support" - 3/Implementation Stage)

Materials for conducting educational activities (see the subchapters „*Consultant as a lecturer*" and „*Other necessary skills of a consultant*", own experiences and inspirations)

Techniques for conducting reflection (see the chapter „Implementation of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support" - „4/ Reflection and evaluation stage" and the handbook *Managing Educator Team Collaboration for Service-Learning Projects*)

Techniques for conducting reflection (see the chapter „Implementation of service learning in educational institutions through collegial support" - „4/ Reflection and evaluation stage" and the handbook *Managing Educator Team Collaboration for Service-Learning Projects*)

Evaluation questionnaires for educators (aimed at evaluating the experience of the project and achieving the set goals – in line with the needs of the organisation).

Final project report (documentation of outputs; in line with the needs of the organisation)

6/ Collection of cases from practice

Six pilot schools from Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia were selected for the Educational Leaders in Education for Sustainable Development project where the collaboration took place during one school year. Consultants from international teams conducted consultations on an ongoing basis, taking over various perspectives and possible solutions to the situations that arose, based on their practice.

In general, we can conclude that in our cases we were not confronted with staff problems but rather with technical problems related to the implementation of the actual methodology into the „life“ of the institutions (e.g., lack of time to implement lessons of the project, motivating the team or involving other participants - detailed in the description below).

Surely, the cases we list below are not exhaustive, we perceive them as „frequent“, but at the same time from the point of view of the project methodology also as „natural“. The process of introducing service learning and collegial support in education usually takes longer and participants need to be patient.

A. Starting a project at school and building a team

In service-learning programmes at schools, it is crucial for several teachers to be working on them together, sharing their roles and responsibilities with other colleagues, using their own experience and creativity, consulting each other, preparing, teaching, and reflecting together on individual teaching procedures.

But how to get more colleagues to collaborate on the project? How to convince them that the project is meaningful for the school and can be enriched by their experience?

You can also often hear such questions from teachers – beginners who need advice on how to start a project at their school.

Best practices:

- We suggest to the team leader that he/she can organize an introductory presentation for the entire teaching staff (or at least part of it), where he/she would explain to his colleagues what the project is about (inspiration by examples of good practice, by programme benefits, etc.).
- If the vision of the project cannot be enforced in the team, we recommend the team leader to try and find at least one “partner” (friend, acquaintance, colleague) with whom there would be understanding. Project can be thus started gradually.
- It is important to avoid orders or verbal attacks on those who do not want to participate, keeping in mind that we cannot force anyone to volunteer or change their inner beliefs. Sometimes you must be patient, start small and others will join when they see how it works.
- Not all teachers need to be involved in the year-round collaboration. Sometimes it is easier to achieve more with a smaller and operational team than with a larger one which does not function properly.

B. Support for long-term cooperation of colleagues

In the beginning it does happen that a larger group of teachers is/wants to be involved in the project. They are enthusiastic about the project and promise their support. Later, however, they realize that they do not have enough time and other capacities to devote themselves to the project and are gradually “stepping back”.

How to provide team leaders with adequate support so that we can encourage them enough, help them, but not do their work for them? How to support leaders to lead their teams well enough not to be distracted in difficult situations?

Best practices

Before the project starts:

A clear vision, goals, and cooperation plan for colleagues right at the beginning of the school year proves to be a solid prevention measure. It should come from the head teacher before the project starts so that everyone (teachers, management) has a clear idea of who could get involved (we then regularly return to it as consultants in meetings with the team and revise the settings, according to needs of teachers and the situation at school)

During the school year:

- Ask the head teacher or the whole team where they see the problem and what they think could work to involve their colleagues more effectively (e.g., increasing regularity or their support in teaching according to current needs).
- Focus on what is already working (e.g., working with at least 2-3 teachers in a team) and try to ground possible solutions in it (do we need other colleagues this year? To what extent are we able to make do on our own?).
- Think about (teacher together with the consultant) what help from colleagues would be needed and who could substitute it from the external capacities of the school/organization (enthusiastic parents, volunteers from local NGOs, etc.).
- If the situation requires it, update the original schedule or plan of activities set at the beginning of the project (in line with the current circumstances).
- Regular reflection in consultations and evaluation meetings with teachers (and management) in the middle of the year is useful for joint discussion of important topics and redefining the way of collaboration within the project (facilitated meeting, coaching questions).
- Try to avoid doing key tasks (scheduling or vision, preparing for the lesson, implementing the lessons) for the team leaders, as it does not lead to learning - on the contrary, it prevents the development of the necessary skills that we focus on in the project.

In the future, teachers will continue in the curriculum (or other activities) without our support, and they must gain the necessary confidence. Therefore, we try to support them (see mentoring, coaching techniques) so that they can overcome even difficult situations themselves, even if with our initial assistance. If they ask us to do so, of course, we can occasionally help them with these activities (take over the leadership of the team, facilitate meetings), but this should not become the rule.

- Also, it is important to support the team leader in difficult moments, for example when resolving „disputes“ with colleagues and to try to ensure that they do not become personal. Pay attention to the correct implementation of the feedback.

C. Project placement in the school curriculum and activities

Current state education programmes in the participating countries still do not allow full application of interdisciplinary relationships in education. For some schools, it can be difficult to implement and deal with a new teaching model (service learning) within their rather “traditional” curriculum. In some schools, on the other hand, various innovative practices have long been implemented “by their own choice”, yet these are exceptions. Therefore, it is necessary to set up an adequate way of implementing the methodology at school before starting our collaboration. The quality of the output of the project then follows from this.

It is necessary to take into consideration that the formal curriculum will always take precedence over other projects and activities. Therefore, it is ideal to incorporate the educational programme directly into the curriculum and plans, or leisure activities of the school. If the programme does not find its place in the school activities, we are at risk of facing significant difficulties during the year, which may lead to the termination of collaboration.

How to support teachers in introducing the methodology of the programme into subjects or interest groups? What is an optimal implementation method that would be useful?

Best practices:

- Explain to the school management as well as to teachers who are interested that in the methodology of the educational programme there is no “additional” knowledge in terms of content, which they will have to add to the already “packed” curriculum. On the contrary, the methodology brings opportunities to implement the topics covered in the curriculum in an innovative, interesting, and practical way (in the real world, moreover, with a positive impact on the surrounding environment).
- Try to find opportunities together with teachers and management to include the programme in the curriculum. If the school does not have previous experience with similar projects, it is ideal to proceed gradually - focus on 2-3 selected subjects or selected competencies that the school must develop in the state curriculum for students or try different forms such as several project days, block teaching with certain regularity.
- If it is not possible to implement the programme into the formal teaching, it is also feasible to choose a form of hobby activity - e.g., an interest group, or other school activities, which take place regularly.
- As representatives of the organization, “insist” on choosing a suitable model for implementing the programme at school and avoid the possibility of finding space for it “later” or “over time”. This seldom works successfully, and it tends to end with problems for all participants.

D. Fighting for time during the school year

It usually happens that the teachers we work with on our projects get stressed by the “chronic” lack of time. This is because more active ones who have decided to get involved usually already have many other projects of their own - school activities, or initiatives outside school. Or they are simply fully committed to their teaching mission, which will take up their own free time. At first, they are full of energy for engaging in something new. Later, though decline in their enthusiasm begins (this is related to specific circumstances at school, being exhausted by the project, etc.)

How do support teachers to successfully manage their teams and use the full potential of collegial support within the given time frame? How to support them to successfully achieve their visions and goals set at the beginning of the project?

Best practices:

- Set up the project framework with teachers at the beginning - it will help to create an idea what and when happens during the school year, ... (Surely, at the beginning we do not know the topic of the student community project, but some key activities can be set in advance and can also leave some room for specific activities arising from the issue...):
 - It is crucial especially at the secondary level and above, where a greater diversity of subjects occurs - it requires coordination within teachers’ schedules and a clear plan of collaboration,
 - The collaboration plan is not definitive, we could change it during the year, we update it as needed.
- Within the initial agreement between the headteacher and the consultant, set the design of regular meetings at which they will be informed about the course of project implementation, reflect, and introduce the necessary changes, adjustments in the schedule, etc.
- Set up regular meetings of the team of teachers (where, when, who - ideally one hour at least once every two weeks)
- Start small and later add more subjects (e.g., in the first year 2-3 are enough, which are taught by members of the collegial team, later more will be added),
- Create monthly plans with the teacher, “check - lists” and “to - do lists” (according to needs and agreement) and evaluate them at the end of the month,
- Sometimes “time management” course (how to effectively plan your work) - can be agreed with a consultant within the “agreement”,
- It is convenient to set the crisis plan, which includes a situation of disintegration of the team of teachers - they will not be able to continue, and, for example, only one teacher will remain (consider possible procedures),
- The hospitality of the school management does a lot - if the project has the support of the principal, it can bring solutions or concessions during the year, according to the current situation (complications in the student project, unexpected situations, epidemics, etc.). It has a supportive effect and thus reduces stress and tension in the team.

E. The motivation of the team when collaborating on the project

Loss of motivation is a common phenomenon that occurs from time to time for most collaborating teams (both teachers' and students' teams). It is therefore important not to underestimate this dimension of support and to work on it regularly. Below are some tips that have worked well for consultants when working with peer teams. If you are stuck, try to think about what would motivate you in the situation. Because we have similar needs as humans, similar techniques work for us.

Best practices:

- Ongoing work with vision and goals (clearly set at the beginning of the collaboration);
- Informal, safe environment, within collegial meetings (refreshments, calm environment, and a good frame of mind),
- To be close to teachers in normal and difficult situations so they feel the support,
- The so-called success “tracking”, noting the impact of the effort, as well as the partial output of the work (mutual feedback, a celebration of success, awards),
- Motivational activities and teambuilding (“motivational plan”, e.g., team “hot drink” at a Christmas market, a weekend away activity, etc.),
- Inspirations and “energizers” in cases of difficult situations or mental fatigue in the team (see the appendix “Inspiromat” below)
- Testing new techniques and procedures,
- Continuous evaluation of the plan with activities, division of tasks and in case something does not work, try to reset it (swapping of roles, tasks, re-definition of goals, etc.),
- A visit of an important person, expert, inspirational example, or good practices for rejuvenation.



Inspiromat – inspirational resources for consultants and educators

WEBSITES

Education for Sustainable Development:

- <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/>
- <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material>

Service learning / Place based learning / Community based learning:

- Roots & Shoots Global – webpage of global educational programme of Dr Jane Goodall based on service learning model <https://rootsandshoots.global/>
- Roots & Shoots UK Resources – collection of school activities <https://www.rootsnshoots.org.uk/resources/>
- Sobel, David, 2004. Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities

Collegial Support:

- www.peer-supervision.com
- www.kollegiale-beratung.de

Other interesting portals:

- Edutopia – great trusted source on what works in education, including best practices, stories of innovation and continuous learning in the real world. <https://www.edutopia.org/>
- School Education Gateway – nline platform for teachers, school leaders, researchers, teacher educators, policymakers and other professionals working in school education – including Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) [School Education Gateway - Homepage](#)
- European Schoolnet – Platform to support collaboration & cooperation among schools in Europe <http://www.eun.org/home>

Environmental Quotes to support motivation:

- <https://www.yourtango.com/2018313744/best-environmental-quotes-save-the-earth>
- <https://www.brainyquote.com/topics/environmental-quotes>
- <https://www.pinterest.ca/janjorjac/environmental-quotes/>

VIDEOS

Short documents from Jane Goodall:

- Mother Earth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48mxaQtbUdU>
- What Happened when we all stopped: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gX0HOy8Pi54>

Documents about environmental problems:

- Climate Change: The Facts, The Great Britain, 2019: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00049b1>
- Baraka - Odysea, USA, 1992: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LETtcYGc__4
- The Cove, USA, 2009: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Tkx8yqbC6A>
- Food, Inc., USA 2008: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1286537/>
- Sharkwater, Canada 2006: <https://www.sharkwater.com/>
- A Plastic Ocean, Hong Kong/Great Britain, 2016: <https://plasticoceans.org/about-a-plastic-ocean/>
- Unser täglich Brot, Austria/Germany, 2005: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_VBdCmabVs
- We Feed the World, Austria, 2005: <https://vimeo.com/262132805>
- Earthlings, USA, 2005: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XrY2TP0ZyU>
- Food Super-Highway, The Great Britain, 2010: <https://www.films.com/id/19384>
- Waste Land, Brasil/Great Britain, 2010: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1268204/>
- The Last Lions, USA, 2011: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=333649227493433>
- Grizzly Man, USA, 2005: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efNtliiyT3M>
- On the Trails of the Glaciers, Italy, 2010: <https://onthetrailoftheglaciers.com/>
- 2040, Australia, 2019: <https://whatsyour2040.com/see-the-film/>
- Great Green Wall, Great Britain, 2019: <https://www.greatgreenwall.org/film>

Films:

- Pachamama (trailer):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrOwxPPfzy8&list=PLV3FABdaj0wqC3o5ef1NJsDJEzQzC5KnC>
- Avatar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MEEnSM55TwY>
- There is no tomorrow: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3Ai1TDQ2CI&feature=emb_title

Youtube:

- Videos explaining things with optimistic nihilism.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsXVk37bltHxD1rDPwtNM8Q>
- Animated motion infographic videos, made in a fun and entertaining way.
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfdNM3NAhaBOXCafH7krzrA>
- National Geographic videos - the world's premium destination for science, exploration, and adventure
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpVm7bg6pXKo1Pr6k5kxG9A>

TOOLS

Education:

- Tool to create learning games/quizzes <https://kahoot.com/>
- Inspirational resources for interactive games (icebreakers, energizers, teambuilders)
<https://www.playmeo.com/>

Project management:

- <https://trello.com/en>
- <https://www.teamgantt.com/h>
- <https://de.padlet.com/>

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Consultant as a facilitator

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Peer supervision. Course of events in a Peer Group Supervision session and tasks of the participants. [cit. 2020-11-10]. Available at: <http://www.peer-supervision.com/Ebene2/ablauf.html>

Kolegiálně poradenství - krátké instruktážní video ku kolegiálnímu poradenství na školách formou tzv. Bálintovy skupiny [Collegial counseling - a short instructional video on collegial counseling in schools in the form of the Bálint group.]. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2RA3L-mOy-4&t=5s (only in Czech)

Consultant as a coach

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HANDBOOK FOR CONSULTANTS: HOW TO APPROACH SERVICE LEARNING THROUGH COLLEGIAL SUPPORT

Experience from the School for Sustainable Living and Roots & Shoots programs of the Erasmus project - Educational Leaders in Education for Sustainable Development

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