



## THE STUDENTS AS ROLE-MODELS

We wish to share with schools, policy-makers and researchers a very interesting and future-oriented perspective emerging along the last years of several Erasmus+ projects. We believe this sharing could be of value to secondary schools engaging in innovation mission learning and open science schooling.

Along the Schools as Drivers and other projects, it became clear that a number of students from different schools and countries appeared extremely *dedicated and empowered*:

- they worked as leaders during the many projects' activities
- they had a very sharp understanding of the project and what innovation missions mean, even beyond partners and collaborators
- they boldly took the scene whenever needed, including delivering critical input about the project, the teacher roles, etc.
- they were clearly driving their teams towards quality results

However, the most important observation was that they were prepared to continue the missions in their schools, to serve as guides for new generations of students and even to make such innovation missions grow into a new school culture.

We think that this small extra might be very important in the long or not so long-term.

### *Why is that?*

Because words like students' "co-creation" and "co-driving of educational innovation" are still mostly theory in Europe; still just words and blue visions.

To make those visions a reality, we precisely need dedicated young students: role-models and leaders.

The especially dedicated young people we saw during the different projects possess all the necessary resources to serve as:

## DRIVERS OF EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

This means that one of the outcomes of this project might be local and perhaps European level initiatives to ensure that these students are engaged in further innovation missions and open science schooling activities - in the school, in the community and maybe even at European level.

The most visionary version of this perspective would be to organise these students at European level 😊

*What does all this mean – “at school level and at European level?”*

## SCHOOL / LOCAL COMMUNITY

Schools participating in such European projects as Schools as Drivers and similar projects might wish to become national and European role-model schools!

They could help other schools develop a school culture of open science schooling based on innovation and student missions.

Most schools across Europe desperately need such concrete and school-2-school guidance!

*What does such a pioneer role mean?*

- the school wishes to make open science schooling and community ecosystem missions a school culture in which more and more students will be involved, including expanding the students' learning space from the classroom to the social and virtual communities
- the school can promote its open science schooling skills and experience locally and nationally and offer to provide interested schools with the needed guidance
- the school might collaborate with local or national educational authorities to make the school's experience and expertise available to other schools
- such services might at some point provide new forms of income for the school
- these activities and the pioneer role might be used as a competitive parameter by the school when promoting the school in the community

Now, to become such pioneer and role-model schools, the schools precisely need the especially dedicated students as co-drivers.

To be credible and really innovative such school roles need to place our dedicated students at the forefront, not as “examples” hiding in the background.

This means that the student role-models should be:

- appointed student innovation or open schooling guides by the school
- co-driving any new open schooling mission initiative in the school and in the community
- guiding new generations of students
- constantly expanding the community network to support the students' missions
- co-create new European initiatives, for example through the network of student role-models created

*We believe that creating a small but very dynamic team of student role-models from the participating schools in several Erasmus+ is possible and who knows maybe they might be the leaders of new Erasmus+ initiatives...*

*Of course, they should receive full support from the schools.*