

Schools as Drivers of Change - Building Young Students' 21st Century Capacity through School-driven Community Change Actions

THE SCHOOL GUIDE

21st CENTURY LEARNING FOR THE NEW YOUNG STUDENTS

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THE SCHOOL AS DRIVER OF CHANGE – 21ST CENTURY LEARNING FOR THE NEW YOUNG STUDENT

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In Collaboration with the Project Partners and School Teams

Erasmus+ Schools as Drivers of Change Project

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Executive Summary

We wish to share with schools, and all interested stakeholders including the general community, a very prominent and future-oriented perspective emerging along the years of implementation of Schools as Drivers of Change and others related Erasmus+ projects. We believe this sharing could be of value to secondary schools engaging in innovation mission learning and open science schooling. Here are the highlights of the topics discussed in this guide.

Bridging School and Local Community

Bringing the gap between school and community is fundamental in the journey of schools becoming drivers of change. Bridging this gap is a process that starts with a general attitude change towards opening up the school and inviting in the views, experiences and expertise of the local community members in support of students' authentic learning experiences. This attitude change should happen at two fronts: bottom-up, stirring teachers' and students' motivation towards different learning approaches in which community partners are involved; and top-down, led by the directives and support of the school administration (and even the local education authorities setting suitable supporting policies on the matter).

Once the grassroots are set at the school level with teachers and students, the implementation of community change missions then have all opportunities to flourish.



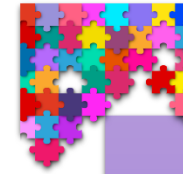
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

- School management facilitates all formal approvals needed for missions in the community



SCHOOL INITIATED CONTACT

- Teachers mediate and coordinate students' initiatives and the collaboration with different institutions of the community



SCHOOL EFFECTIVE MAPPING

- Community members, parents and stakeholders are, encouraged to be active decision-makers concerning the life, education and well being of students

Benefits are running two-ways for schools and the local community in the form of having more motivated students, towards becoming mindful 21st century citizens.

Maximising Students' Strengths

When the students are supported to engage with their local community as agents of change:

- they learn through addressing real-life and real-time challenges instead of working with artificial material in the classroom
- they learn through paying attention to needs and things that should be changed, improved or even invented in the community
- they learn through engaging in long term missions to create change in the community
- they learn through acting entrepreneurial and through growing an innovation mind-set
- they learn through working in teams, in complicated projects and with a wide range of societal players and resources
- they learn through developing increasing **agency**: avoiding contemplation and taking action, avoiding hesitation and demonstrating intention, purpose and direction – and avoiding “knowing about” and seeking “accomplishment”.

In fact, **students become role models within the nurturing environment that schools as change drivers create**. To support this thriving environment at school, the students role-models should be:

- appointed student innovators or open schooling guides by the school
- co-driving any new open science schooling mission initiatives 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 that could be created among project-participating schools.

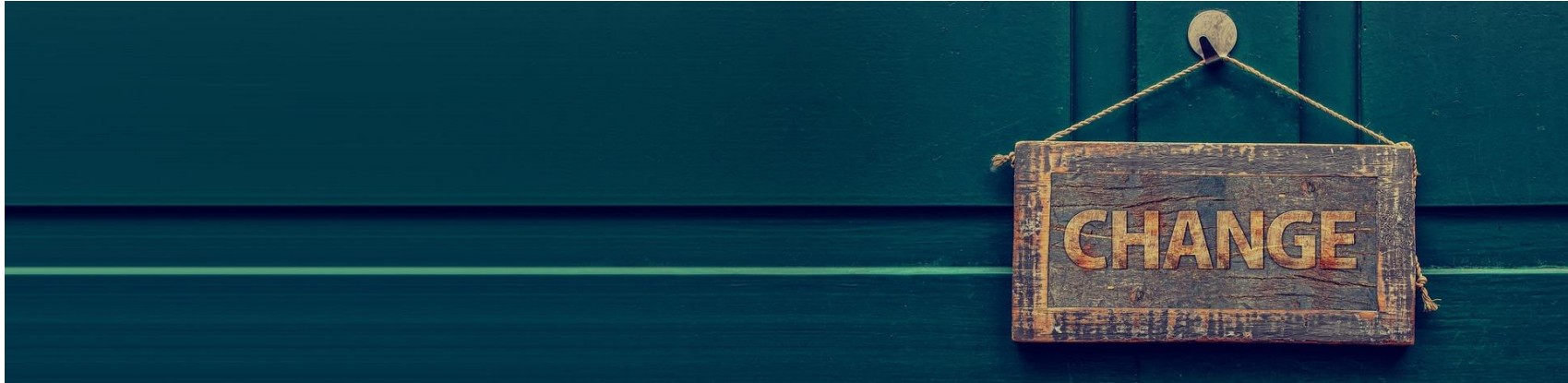
The Agentic Teacher



The agentic teacher is a teacher who supports the development of students' agentic skills and inspires them to take initiative in bringing changes to their communities and beyond. The star agentic teacher is then *inspirational, knowledgeable, student-focused, supportive and open-minded*.

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Schools As Community Change Drivers



The EU Commission, the OECD and leading learning pioneers all agree that school education should change dramatically to make students fit for learning, working and living in the 21st century. They all agree that:

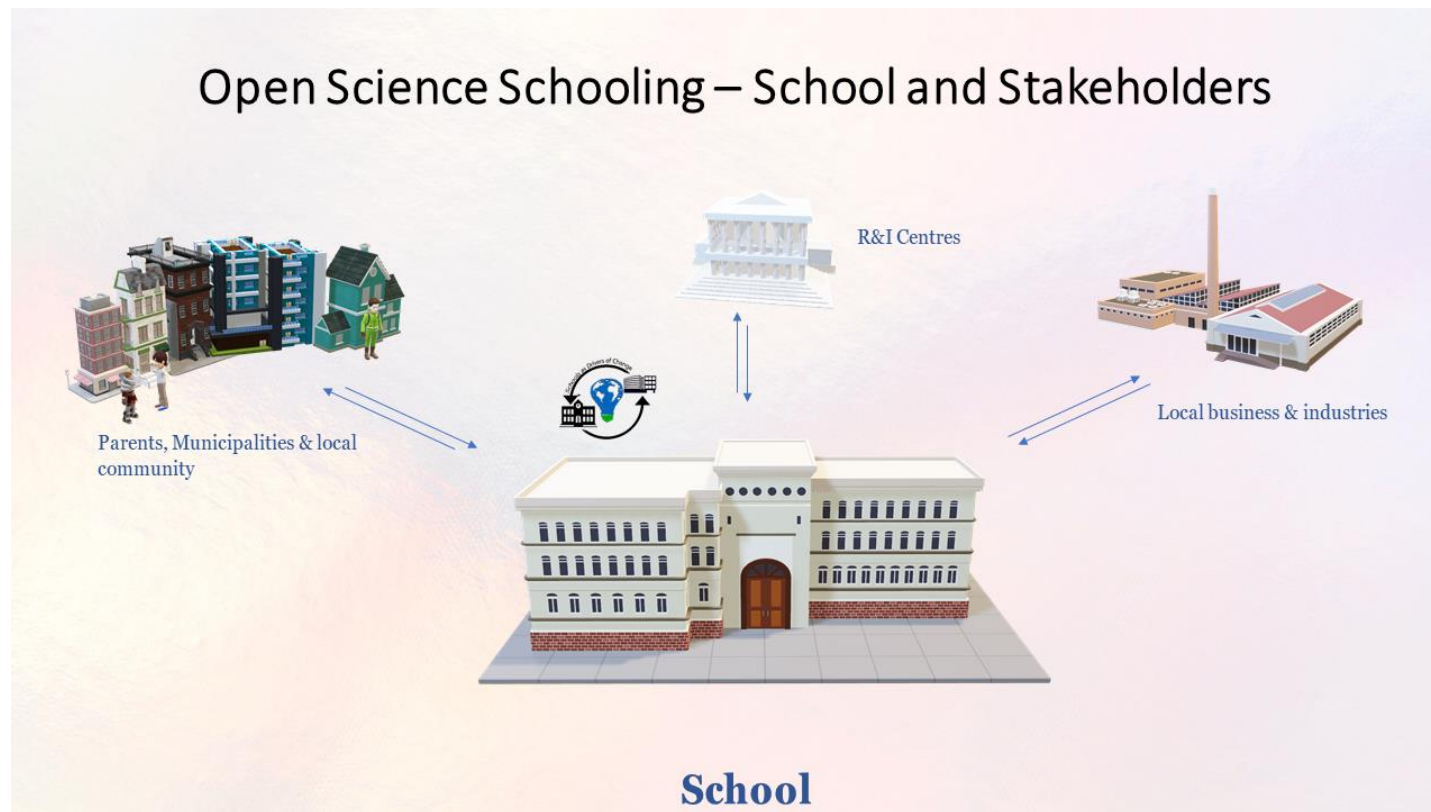
- students should become **change drivers** through new open schooling and taking action approaches
- schools must open the doors to **real-life learning**
- and even that schools should become **agents of well-being and change** in the community

These are dramatic challenges to traditional primary and secondary schools that fundamentally break away from hundreds of years' education. The ultimate goal of these changes, they all agree, is to make the new generations of students “change agents” in the community and in the world. Students should learn not only to become change agents in school, but also to learn through becoming change agents in school.

The Schools as Drivers of Change Project assumes that this can only happen to the extent that the school itself becomes a change agent, **a driver of change**. A school that is an agent of change in its community has positive influence on the community where it resides, and can inspire, as a role-model, other actors in the community to also become pro-active.

In this guide, we present the processes in which 5 schools from different countries across EU and Turkey engaged towards becoming a “school as a driver of change” in their local communities. This guidance pack also showcases best practices and scenarios to illustrate how the processes can be adjusted to different realities and contexts.

Open Science Schooling



Open science schooling methodology representation - interaction between school and local community stakeholders.

As solidly demonstrated by research and by the EU Commission secondary school needs fundamental change: from traditional classroom and teacher-oriented education to real-life based *open schooling* through which the young students acquire the capacity to act in society, to take initiatives and to manage constant change.

In short this is called capacity to agency, capacity to be “**change agents**” (OECD). The capacity to such agency cannot be taught in traditional classrooms, but only acquired through deep engagement in real-life and real-time challenges in the students’ local and global communities. Obviously, such new “didactics” fundamentally challenge what we call school education today.

The Schools as Drivers of Change Project deployed a participatory **Open Science Schooling methodology**, through which schools’ teams collaborate with local community stakeholders in the design, development and implementation of missions targeted to tackle a palpable issue in the local society. The focus of the missions’ implementation was on how schools, through this kind of work, are able to drive the changes they want to see realised in their communities.

Students' Agentic Skills Development

Agentic skills are skills that are needed to bring about change in a community (local, regional, global) while, at the same time, they are developed in the process of change implementation.

While becoming agents of change in their communities, through the implementation of missions with stakeholders, the students reported to develop agentic skills including: **social, psychological, cognitive** and **special knowledge** skills.



SOCIAL

Communication - talking to people, raising awareness and teamwork

Solidarity - getting involved in the community

Empathy and becoming sensitive to the problems of environment



PSYCHOLOGICAL

Self-regulation - reaction in mass panic situations and in stressful situations

Resilience - reaction to failure and dealing with challenges and tough experiences

Re-gaining positive attitude - to laugh and smile more

Assertiveness - speaking own mind



COGNITIVE

Logical thinking

Critical thinking

Learning to learn



SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Video editing, website creation, etc. (ICT)

Self-defence

First-aid and treating wounds

Acting and performing

Project implementation

Recycling and efficient use of energy

◆ How to develop agentic skills?

*Students develop their agentic skills through immersive engagement with the community, according to the views that students expressed during this project. **Community immersion** implies that students go out to their communities with the intention to make a change and bring about improvement(s) for the common good. Skills learning and attitudes development in and from the community takes place in several overlapping processes including:*

1. Students **meeting a variety of community stakeholders** and learning specific knowledge/skills from them. This fosters social skills as well as specific knowledge acquisition skills
2. Students **engaging holistically in community life**, that is, engaging both mind and body to affect a community change. This fosters the development of a proactive attitude, active citizenship, responsibility and leadership as well as the development of social, psychological, cognitive, and specific knowledge skills. This holistic engagement with the community is manifested through:
 - identifying the community need for a change

- seeking a solution to the community need
 - taking action to make the change
 - 3. Students **seeing themselves as useful members of their community**. This fosters their pro-active attitude and active citizenship, while at the same time it supports the development of their self-confidence.
 - 4. Students **seeing they can influence a change for their community**. This strengthens their pro-active attitude and active citizenship and increases their self-confidence and school motivation. It also supports the development of agency, self-efficacy and feeling of empowerment.
 - 5. Students **seeing the change they brought to the community is lasting**. This further strengthens their pro-active attitude and active citizenship and increases their self-confidence as well as their agency and feelings of empowerment.
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Teachers' Role

The teachers' role is key in supporting the students in becoming agents of change, while at the same time teachers develop agentic teachers' skills, themselves.

Community Stakeholders

Two-way Benefits

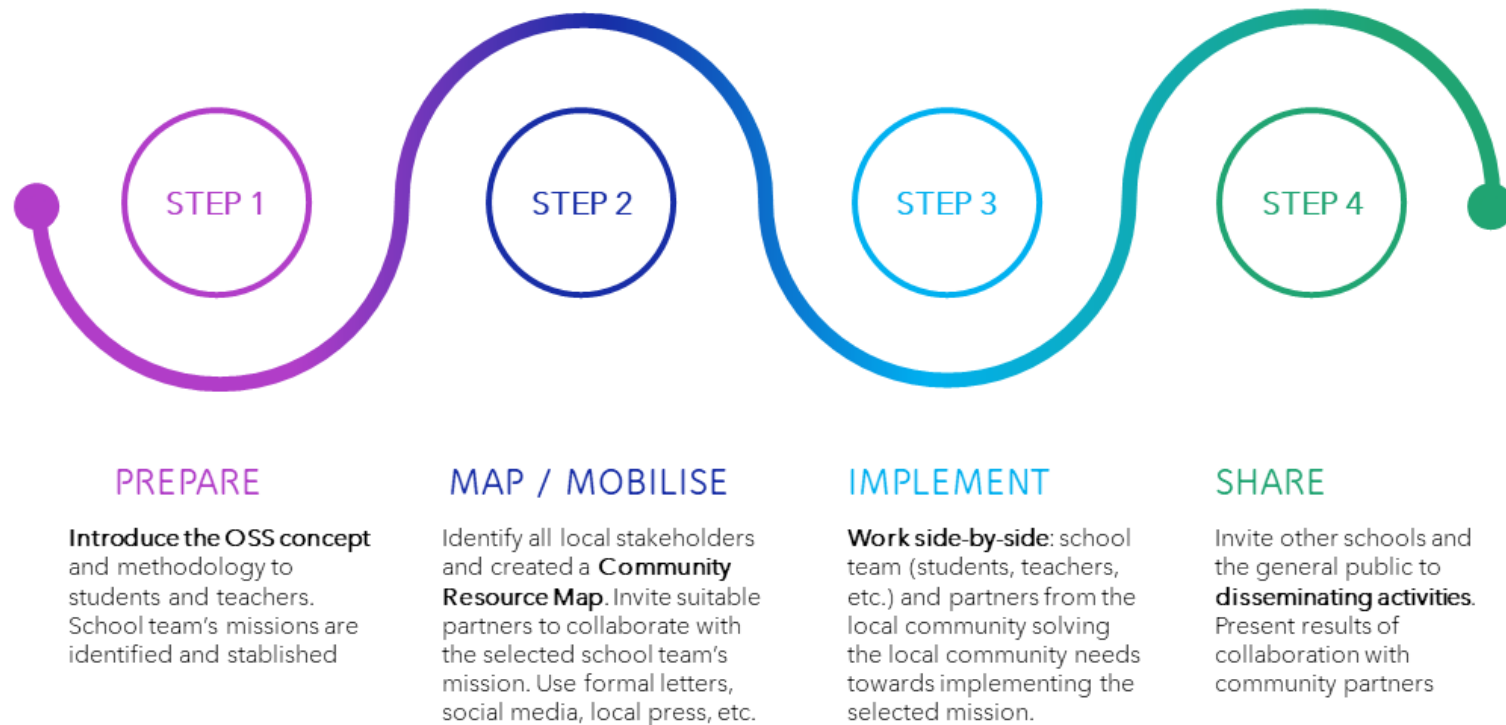
The local stakeholders, as partners in the design, development and implementation of missions alongside school teams can also benefit from the experience. The advantage of the collaboration could be seen in a boost of the social responsibility fulfilment of the partner as well as wider visibility of their outreach programs within the local/national community, for instance. Furthermore, the partners might benefit from the influx of fresh ideas, perspectives and experiences that the school team could offer.

A strong collaboration with the schools is based on effective communication among the collaborative groups. For the external stakeholder, in the case of SMEs for example, the idea of 'lifelong learning' is important as well as the availability of human resources to support the missions, and the development of skills for the future, through which they secure a capable workforce. Therefore, understanding the needs of the partner provides an excellent opportunity to make the collaboration beneficial for all involved.

How-To's

Here we present a summary of the processes that the schools engaged during the project in order to build, sustain and facilitate long-lasting community collaboration with local stakeholders, fundamental activity towards becoming drivers and agents of change.

Building community collaboration



Prepare

As a lead teacher, before you start anything it is fundamental that the school team understands the philosophy of the Open Science Schooling method regarding how students and the school staff are to engage in community change missions. Gaining approval for the mission's implementation from the school administration is also key here to secure the administration support and collaboration.

Map / Mobilise

Find what aspects or issues in the local community needs change or improvement by:

- engaging the students asking their opinions, encouraging them to do local observations
- expanding the school's vision to include community

Identify the potential community partners to support you in the change mission

- make a community resources map
- Contact the partners relevant for your mission, especially the municipality office to gain their support, their ideas and secure collaboration (permits). This may be done in informal or formal way with official letters expressing the wish to collaborate signed by the school principal and the mission supervising teachers

Implement

Engage actively with the community partners working hand in hand. The community partners could provide material and financial support to the missions as well as be participants and expert guests during mission implementation.

Furthermore, learning from the community experts is an asset that students have during mission implementation – ask the community stakeholders to provide students and staff with the knowledge, skills required to make the anticipated community change:

- workshops for the students
- mutual learning in students' and stakeholders' workshops

Additionally, it is always a good idea to link the mission activities to the school curriculum to facilitate the time management of the school team.

Share

A very important aspect of mission implementation relates to sharing the progress and outcomes of the activities. This is key in spreading the seed of community change mission by demonstrating the work carried out during mission as well as the partnership that makes it possible, to other schools and to the general public.

◆ TIPS!

⇒ Try to connect actions with the community to the school curriculum.

⇒ Give a voice to your community partners: design suitable challenges and opportunities for Community Actors to collaborate meaningfully

⇒ Make sure the students are aware of all the possibilities that the community partners can offer, e.g., workshops dedicate to students (agents of change) provided by all the mentioned partners form the local community.

Facilitating Community Collaboration

A suitable **matching process** between the school team's mission and the skills of the external partner is vital to facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders in a more sustainable way. Therefore, **bridging schools and community** is necessary. This requires commitment and effort on both parts, the schools, and community partners. Nevertheless, the process is initiated and maintained by the schools, as the main drivers of change.

I. Changing the mindset and attitudes towards school – community collaboration

Schools' Role	School-Community Collective Effort
realising that school is a part of community and thus has obligations towards it (school to the community)	realising that the school-community collaboration is mutually nurturing.
fostering the teachers' sense of belonging towards the community (their proactive role there and importance of their initiatives)	"One could imagine then that it would take a community to raise a school. (...) We need to work as a community to nurture our schools for our particular community needs." (Lithuanian teachers)
orienting the teachers and the students towards community	

II. Creating a nurturing atmosphere and suitable opportunities for community collaboration

Schools' Role	Partners' Role	Collective Effort
creating opportunities for the students to engage in the community, hosting community workshops	creation of volunteering opportunities	low-threshold communication
scheduling students' regular visits at community partners' premises	organisation of educational visits	mediation of the teachers' and students' initiatives (making it possible, being open)
including learning components in the collaborative initiatives		

III. Structuring collaboration - collective effort

- Creating parents and society advocacy groups
- Establishing a formal system of schools-community collaboration
- Disseminating the news on collaborative initiatives to the wider public

Sustaining Community Collaboration

To sustain collaboration with community partners, it is fundamental that the school could become an outward-looking school by reaching out to the community and creating an open culture.

An effective collaboration system **family ↔ community ↔ school** is created and maintained when:

Internally at School

- The school's administration approval and support for the project, mission initiatives are ensured (incl. formalities required by the mission implementation).
- The students know their key role as active providers and protagonists in the mission.
- Teachers on the one hand mediate and coordinate students' work and collaboration with the community partners (including the students' parents) on the other.
- Strategies to balance motivation and capacities are in place.

School and Partners

- The nature of partnership is engaging and comprehensive and thus promotes sustained collaboration.
- Partners are invited to the project, mission meetings and activities and are encouraged to take active part in those events and in decision-making regarding the students' education.
- Regular dissemination of the project, mission news is carried out in social media.
- Evaluations are being conducted after each project event.

Future of the Partnership

- Plans for long-term collaboration are being made.

◆ TIPS!

⇒ Local organizations can help look deeper into their process of production, their professional skills. By organising collective events, community organisations can support developing educational areas and broadening possibilities of school children.

⇒ It is fundamental to support the students' team realisation of their key role in the mission design, development and implementation. This will support their active role and initiatives.

⇒ Strategies that establish and maintain an effective match with the motivation and capabilities of involved parties is cornerstone.

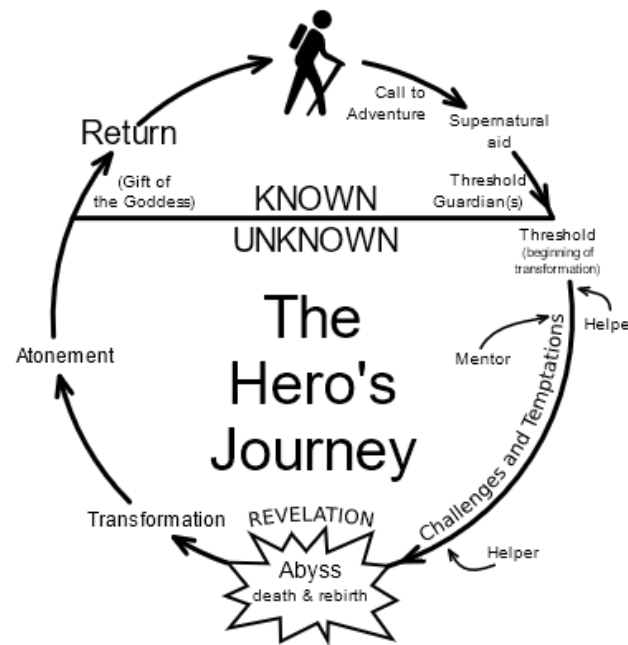
⇒ Developing suitable plans for maintaining large-scale initiatives for school-community partnerships in order to engage to a long-term collaboration with all relevant stakeholders is a fundamental aim.

2

Community Change Missions in Practice



In this chapter we present practical examples how the schools that participated in the Schools as Drivers of Change project engaged in community change missions. We use the a representation based on [Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey"](#), in order to portray scenarios in which students develop cognitive and agentic skills through the design, development and implementation of their local change missions.



Source Wikipedia, public domain image

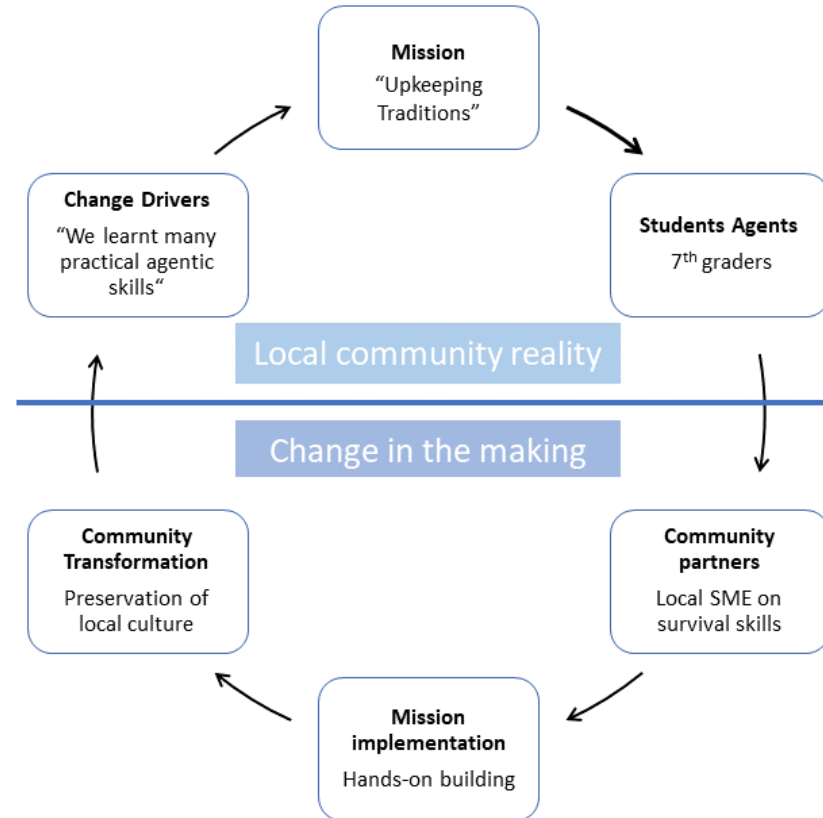
[Local community reality](#)
[Call to make a change](#)
[Students agents](#)
[Change drivers](#)

[Change in the making](#)
[Community partners](#)
[Community transformation](#)
[Mission implementation](#)

Whenever possible, the descriptions of the **call to make a change, that is the school missions**, is presented in the students' voices through narratives or descriptive plays. We believe this format gives more weight to the presented descriptions as well as provides a window of insight into the mission's importance from the perspective of the students and teachers.

Finland

Scenario 1 - Upkeeping Local Traditions



Click on the image to watch the video of this mission (also here <https://youtu.be/LDfOBUjuO58>)

- **Call to make a change - "Upkeeping Local Traditions"**

"We started our journey by going to lake during cold Finnish winter. As we were learning traditional surviving skills such as building an igloo, ice fishing, setting up fire and making food, we got to know each other better and learned new "agentic skills" to be utilize in the future. At the beginning of our first mission, our aim was to create a pancake cafe to spread kindness in our local community. "
(Student narrative, mission's description)

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Teachers, students and regional council of North Karelia.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and agentic)**

Collaboration, courage, self-resilience, speaking English, making food and traditional surviving skills.

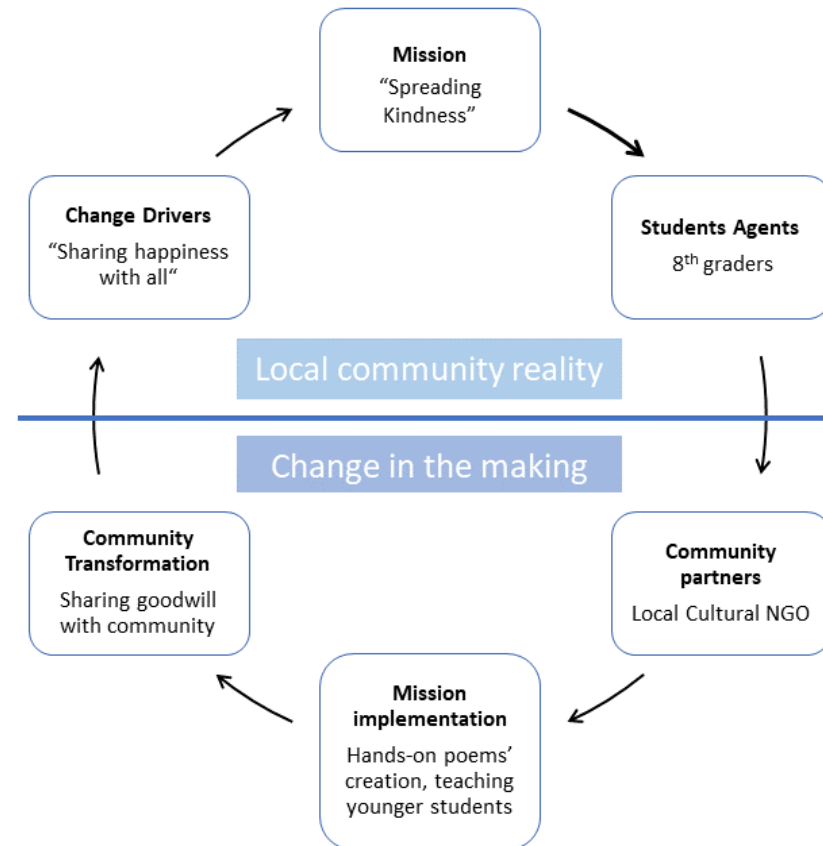
- **Curricular integration (subjects involved if any)**

There are subject-based and transversal skills and competences in the Finnish national core curriculum for basic education. All of the skills learned can be seen as a part of the transversal competences such as thinking and learning to learn, taking care of oneself and managing daily, working life competence and entrepreneurship and participation, involvement and building a sustainable future.

- **Benefit for the community**

"This was the beginning of our journey. We made a funny video to introduce the skills we have gathered during the trip. Video was watched by the students and staff of the UEF teacher training school. Later on, the video was sent to charity campaign organized by Regional council of North Karelia which was the main and most important purpose of the video." *(Student narrative, benefit of the mission to the local community).*

Scenario 2 - Spreading Kindness



Click on the image to watch a video of this mission (also here <https://youtu.be/D2EgosD8gEI>)

- **Call to make a change - "Spreading Kindness"**

"Everyday life is very busy and positivity and consideration for others can be rare, so we wanted to spread kindness, goodness and positivity specially to elderly people and inhabitants in Joensuu region, by Christmas cards and with little uplifting poems." (*Student narrative, mission description*)

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Teachers, students, the City of Joensuu (especially cultural secretary), NGOs (Runon ystävät, Ukri), elderly home.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and agentic)**

Collaboration, courage, self resilience, guidance, helping younger students to learn.

- **Curricular integration (subjects involved if any)**

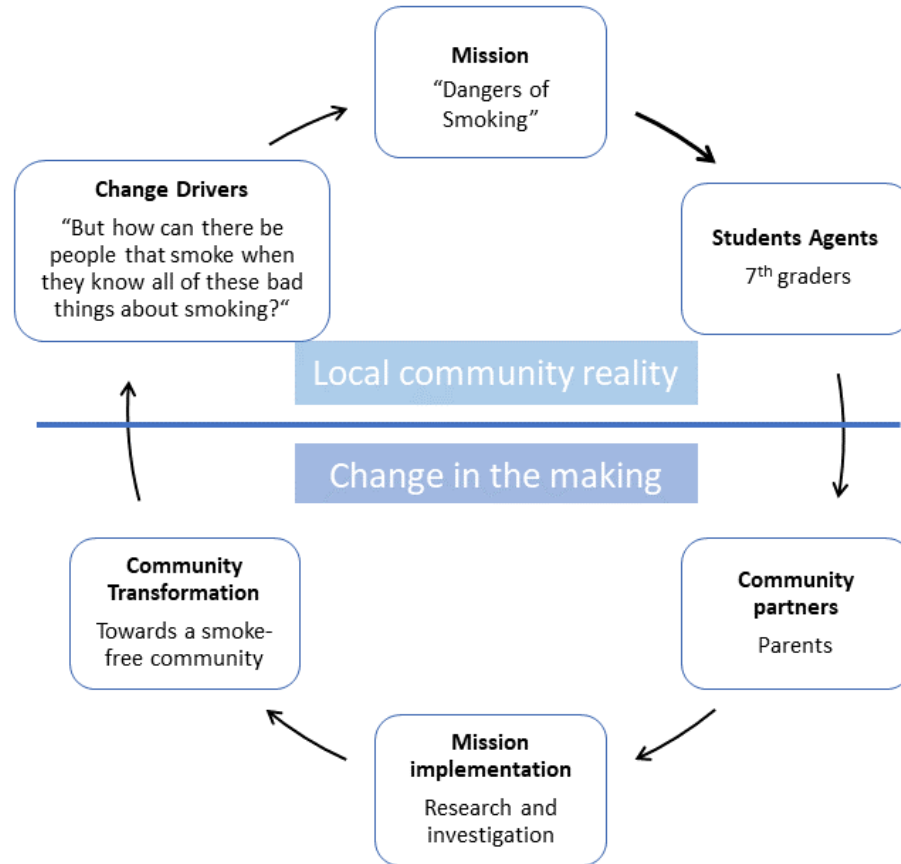
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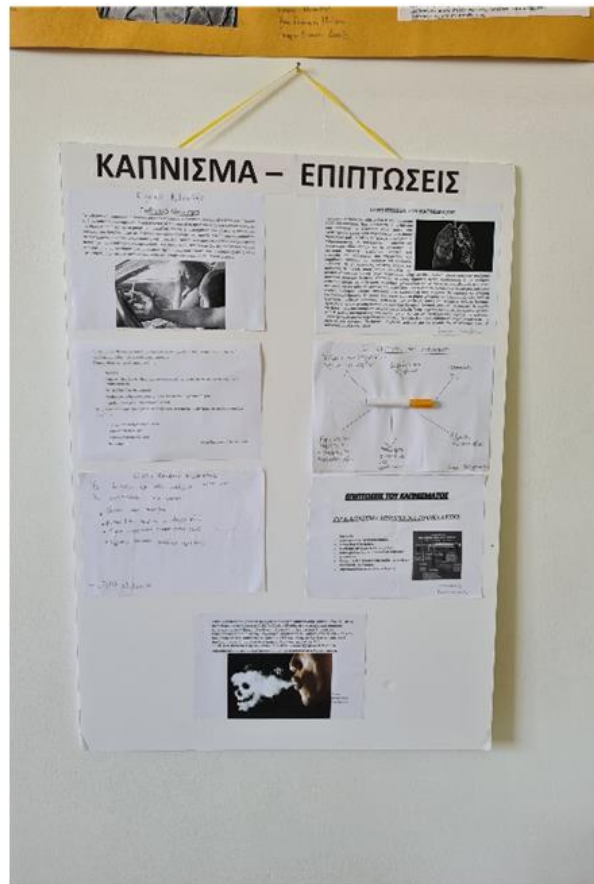
- **Benefit for the community**

Residents and the elderly in Joensuu got a happy mood and something positive to think about, first graders got to know older students and residents in Joensuu got to see what kind of activities middle schoolers do.

Greece

Scenario 1 - Spreading Awareness: Dangers of Smoking





Mission I – Dangers of Smoking

Team Greece, Platon School

- Call to make a change - [Spreading Awareness: Dangers of Smoking](#)

"It was 6 months ago when I watched a documentary on tv about the problems smoking cause. I really could not believe how many people have health issues and even die every year due to smoking. I also heard many things that I could not understand so I decided to discuss it with my biology teacher. The next day that I was in school I searched for my biology teacher and asked him about all the things that I could not understand, I had even kept some notes from the documentary. When my teacher started answering all of my questions, he stopped for a moment, and he said: "I believe that we should have this discussion together with the other students from

the class". And so, we did.

The next time that we had a biology class, the teacher asked us to play a kahoot in order to see how much we know about the problems that smoking can cause. It was shocking for us to realize that we hardly knew little about this significant subject. Most of the students of the class wanted to learn more about and so the teacher asked us to do some research about it on the internet and the next time we could discuss about our findings.

We all did some digging, and we found at that smoking can cause a lot of problems for the ones who smoke but also for the people around them (passive smoker). One of the students said: "But how can there be people that smoke when they know all of these bad things about smoking?". After we discussed it a little with our teacher, we realized that there will always be people that know that they hurt themselves by smoking but there may also be some of them that they do not know how bad it is for their health. This is why we decided to be AGENTS of CHANGE by informing students, parents and generally visitors of our school about the problems that smoking can cause and we created two big posters with all the information that we found and put them in the main hall of the school so everyone could see." (*Student narrative describing the mission*).

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Teachers facilitators as well as parents and family members. The mission is the result of the observed need in increase young people's awareness on the dangers that smoke pose to health and wellbeing.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and agentic)**

The students gained the following skills: critical thinking (e.g., searching and identifying information on the internet), ICT (e.g., creating multimedia presentations) and teamwork.

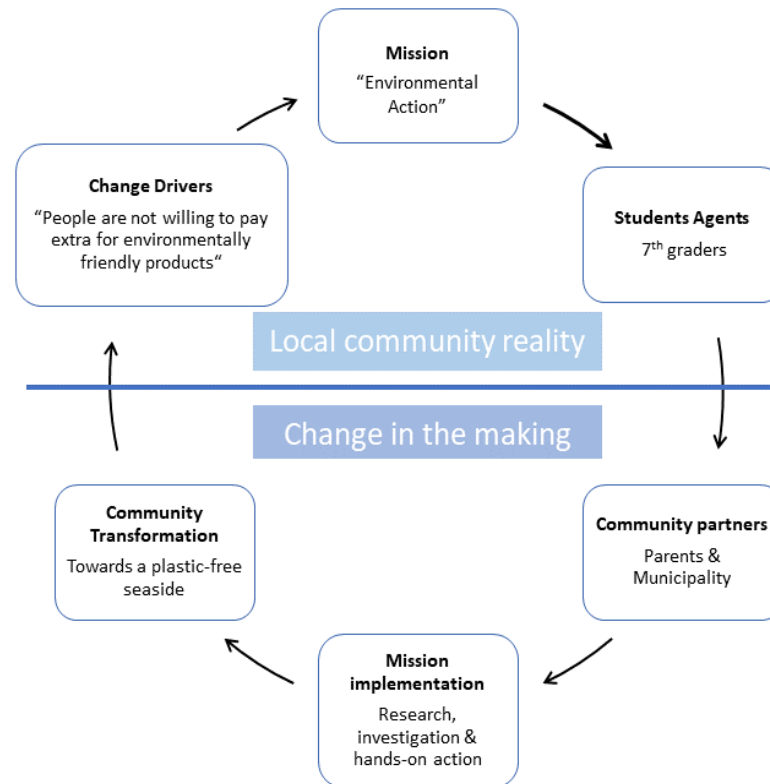
- **Curricular integration (subjects involved if any)**

The mission was developed within the Biology subject matter

- **Benefit for the community**

"We hope that by doing this, we will bring some change, and prevent some people from smoking or even persuade some of them to quit." (*Student narrative, benefit of their mission for the local community*)

Scenario 2 - Environmental Action!



Click on the image for a video of this mission (also here <https://youtu.be/l0Ve7C96oLs>)

- **Call to make a change - Environmental Action!**

There was a need to understand the perspectives of the local community on issues related to the local environment. From this local need, the school team embarked on a mission to investigate the local community views and how suitable action could be taken to tackle the issues identified.

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Teacher facilitators as well as parents and family members. The local Municipality office joint forces during the implementation of the actions taken.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and agentic)**

The students developed the following skills: critical thinking (e.g., searching and identifying information on the internet); ICT skills (e.g., creating multimedia presentations, formatting, organizing and calculating data in spreadsheets); teamwork; and specific knowledge (e.g., creating questionnaires)

- **Curricular integration (subjects involved if any)**

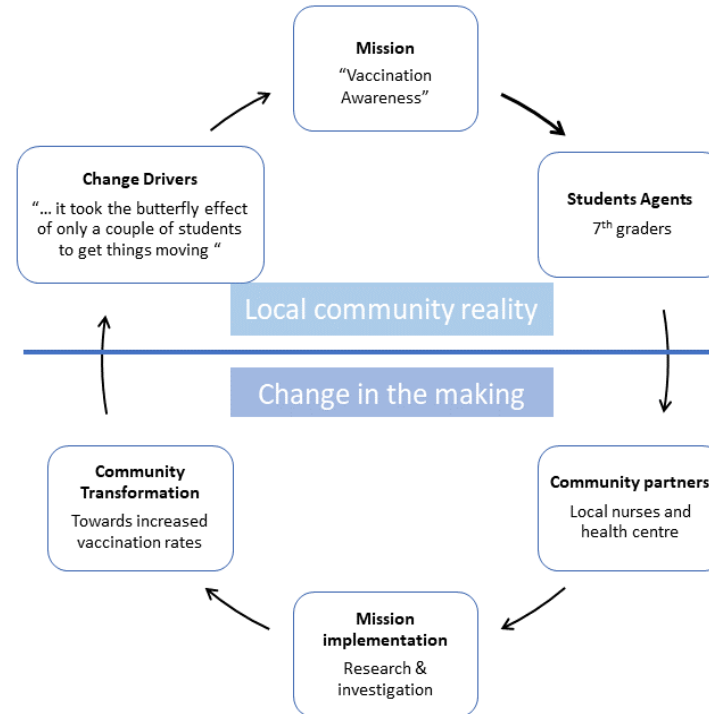
The mission was developed within the ICT and math subject matters.

- **Benefit for the community**

Awareness was raised in the local community about the two main problems of the city, as they were revealed from the analysis of the questionnaires: the garbage on the beaches and the traffic conjunction.

Lithuania

Scenario 1 - Vaccination Awareness



- **Call to make a change - Vaccination Awareness**

"Some time long ago, the world was at relative ease. There was little unrest, and the world was optimally arranged. Nobody could think at the time that the paradigm would ever shift. But everything changed when a disease broke out; a disease like no other, something you'd only see in movies. A disease that struck fast and hospitalized many. At first, few were startled by it, but as cases

rose, people's concerns could no longer be quelled. The media and officials of many developed countries gathered round, raised awareness and tried to propose a way to halt the spread of the disease, but no great solution was found.

For about a year, times were tumultuous. Nothing could be done except isolation, which at this point was practiced at almost all times. This led to people being shut in their homes, and generally, the social environment was ruined. As a result, many of the affected sought a cop-out; something that would finally lift them and the society they belong to out of the misery. And soon came a saving grace; a vaccine was developed. This was the only conceivable tool to inhibit the disease's spread. It took some time, but eventually, each country had its own supply of shots they could distribute to the people. Still, many people believed that it was best for them not to get the vaccine, because they had gotten used to the lifestyle they were in thanks to the pandemic. And this led to a low percentage of the population actually getting the vaccine. Officials wanted more to get vaccinated, and some people took up the mission themselves. Among those people were the **“Drivers of Change” students and teachers**; the children decided it would be best to act when people were most affected, at the height of the pandemic; and they did. Despite restrictions and lockdowns, they managed to visit several facilities, not excluding the inside of their school or hospitals, museums and the like.

They set out on a mission to enlighten the workers and visitors of the facilities on the impact of vaccines. At the core of their message was the true use of the shots; it was to restore society to its former state, without grand numbers of sickness. And they did their best to inform everyone they could about the dangers of perpetual pandemic. They made presentations, organized information, made posters and went on online forums to spread their message."

(Student narrative, mission description).

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Teachers facilitators as well as parents and family members. The local health institutions joint forces during the implementation of the actions taken. Furthermore, students gathered to form conferences aimed at resolving low rates of vaccination. When the pandemic hit, people were hesitant to get the vaccine, and our students wanted to help raise awareness, increase trust in the medical process and increase the rates of vaccination for our town. Tens of them set out to make presentations and raise awareness on the topic of communal immunity and its importance. The medical aspects of vaccination were also discussed, citing research from reputable sources.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and agentic)**

During their missions for health causes (such as vaccination and immunity), students learned to consult professionals, analyze the process of medical practices in hospital, and found ways to share their knowledge with the public. The students also learned critical

thinking and processing of newest research information, while also improving their social skills as promoters of local and global change.

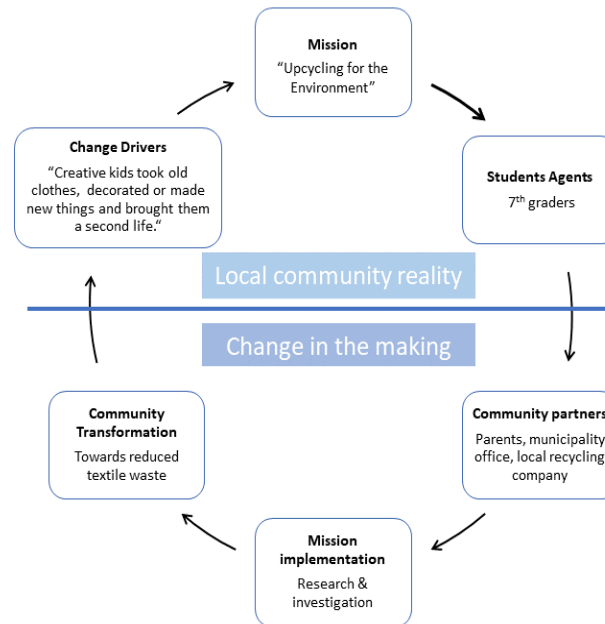
- **Curricular integration (subjects involved if any)**

The issue of vaccination became pertinent in our school due to restrictions imposed during the lockdown. Awareness had to be raised quickly to increase the rates of vaccination in our school. The subjects most involved were English (students read through the latest information in English, and studied the pandemic's effects on other countries, topical vocabulary was introduced accordingly), Biology (the scientific aspects of vaccination and immunity were discussed) and IT (the students learned to gather and process raw data online to outsource their knowledge and relate the reliable information, as affirmed by them, to people from other countries). As a result, the students became more resilient in the practice of garnering knowledge and turning it into a positive factor for local change.

- **Benefit for the community**

The mission was a feat underappreciated at the time, but after the harsh pandemic winter was over, many could catch a glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel. Their efforts had paid off, and soon, with the advent of spring, cases diminished, and most people already knew what to do thanks to the students' mission. Clearly, it was the smallest of outliers that headed the rebirth of an orderly society; it took the butterfly effect of only a couple of students to get things moving again. And that takes into account all students and young people from around the world that contributed and tried to make a difference. Maybe, they thought, the pandemic could never be over without them, and for circumventing this they were proud. At last, countries all around the world abolished the restrictions, concluded that the world was safe once again, and vowed never to look or step back. [The world was at peace again, having gone through a difficult time in history.](#)

Scenario 2 - Upcycling for the Environment



- **Call to make a change - Upcycling for the Environment**

"Once upon a time there was a small-town school. From Monday to Friday, it was filled with students. The kids were all different, but they all studied and went to classes. Sun set and rose, day after day went by like usual, until one rainy afternoon the 8th graders gathered for a project Drivers of Change meeting. They settled down in their seats and were ready to work. The teacher wanted them all to think of ideas for their next project mission. They thought long and hard, until recycling was brought up. It fit well with them, but a better idea sparked in their heads - **what if we made it on textile recycling and pollution instead?** And it was a brilliant idea for the project. Once they thought of it, their minds were full of goals on what to do further. The students understood that our earth cannot cope with the current rate of destruction. After all, clothes and other textile become waste someday. And if we don't recycle and reuse it, we'll run out of resources eventually. And so the mission began. Research was the first step." (*Student narrative, mission description*).

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Students were tasked with finding a way of mitigating environmental damage from everyday communal waste products such as unrecycled textile, paper and plastic. They decided to take used clothes, fabric and later paper to create canvases for something artistic, which is where their creative side blossomed. Another way of lowering the amounts of textile waste was donation action for the refugees from Ukraine. Students, parents, teachers and other community members were encouraged to revise their wardrobes and instead of throwing away the unused clothes - donate them to those in need. It was a huge success. Sometimes people were so heart-warmed that they donated new clothes, blankets, linen or clothes.

Students together with the teacher have visited the mayor of the city and asked for more information about textile recycling, about the possibility to install textile recycling containers. They have also visited the local recycling company and asked to join, because their help is vital.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and/or agentic)**

During their missions for global causes (such as recycling, upcycling, donation, environmentalist discussions), students learned to cooperate, empathise, outsource their knowledge, discuss information in a professional manner and disseminate their ideas to the public - all of which are key in the process of raising awareness on a pertinent issue like the climate or social crisis.

- **Curricular integration**

The subjects of English, Geography Science and Technologies were involved the most. During English class, students discussed texts that provided up-to-date climate data, such as climate models, global emission numbers and integrative climate policy design in commissions such as the EU and BRICS. During Geography, the more fundamental aspect of climate change was studied, namely the basics of how emissions are generated and what harm they may lead to. The duration of these classes was no longer than it used to be. The only difference was the subject matter.

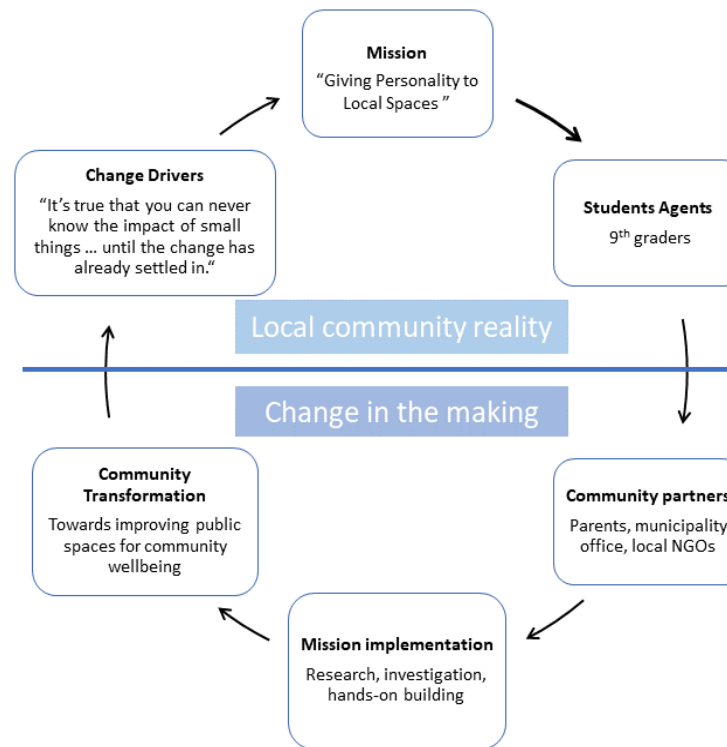
- **Benefit to the community**

The presentations, surveys, creative tasks and videos were enough to make students think and thus change their bad habits regarding textile pollution. Students were motivated and driven by the thought of helping our world. With that being said, they are planning to do many more things. Students organised an exhibition of pictures made from old T-shirts.

"This project is so important, not only to the world, but also to us – students, because we are learning that carelessness does irreversible damage to nature." (student, Lithuanian Team)

Romania

Scenario 1 - Giving Personality to Local Spaces



Click on the image to watch a video of this mission (also here <https://youtu.be/21izLouxnIc>)

Hello! I am Sofia, and I found my true self in helping others emotionally and now I am a psychologist travelling the world in my free time. In this story I will provide a beautiful reunion which I had with my colleagues Iulia, Tania, Mike, and Rare from Liceul Don Orione.

- **Call to make a change - Giving Personality to Local Spaces**

There is a sunny day outside, and the **first agents of change from Oradea** are having a reunion, after ten years since our students transformed into agents of change.

Iulia (I): Hello how are you?

Sofia (S): Very well, I am really glad to see you!

I: Me too I miss talking to you!

S: So you became a doctor... just so you know I heard lots of good things about you

I: I also had people tell me that you are really helpful

S: Thanks!

Mișu (M): Hello Dr Iulia it's been a long time since I've seen you Sofia I can't believe how long it's been!

I: Do you remember that play where are were money?

M: Oh I think it's been at least six or seven years is anyone else coming?

S: Rares and Tania

Tania (T): Hello everyone how are you guys doing I'm glad to see you all!

S: Rares is here!

Rares (R): Hello!

S: do you remember when our teacher came to tell us about the Erasmus project what were your first thoughts?

M: I do remember she was like "we have some news there is an Erasmus project in our school" and I was like "what is that I've never heard of it before"

I: I remember the meeting that we **had with the headmaster**

S: Yes, when we first met as a group and we split up into two teams

M: I remember that even from the beginning we had a very good vibe together

T: But do you remember when we had to design the logo?

S: I still have the T-shirt with it

M: I can't believe that you still have it

S: I have it hanging in my office!

I: Yes that is it!

M: I remember how I made it that day I went home and began **brainstorming ideas with my sister and mom** I think that I spent half an hour on it but it turned out pretty good

T: And then came the rehabilitation of that ancient table I remember how much the headmaster supported us even let work in his office

S: Yes I never thought that someday I'll end up listening to music in the headmasters office

I: I remember it like it was yesterday

S: And then we got those journals...

I: Yes I remember I still have mine.

M: I was just about to ask you what's up with all the books?

I: Oh I still have some final exams to take

M: I think Rares was not with us in the first year

T: No he came only in the second year

M: Yes I remember now there were two years of the project and the Rares came in the second. And he saved us with a lot of things, I remember how he helped us make so many videos and edit them

T: But do you guys remember what our first mission was about?

S: Yes it was about **giving personality to places**

T: Yes and the places were **Piata Devei and 1 December Park**

M: Yes I remember how we painted those tires.

R: I remember that I saw them and I was wondering who did this but then I saw our school's name and it made sense, I first thought that you guys wanted to open a car service

S: We had some work to do with all the renovations in the park but it was worth it

M: I'm wondering if they are still there

S: You know I walked by them one day and they were still there

R: I still have connection with the 1 December park because everyone wants photos there

T: I really think that we made a difference it was a little stressful with all the permits that we needed but in the end it was worth it, I am really glad we had support from our community

M: I remember especially that week in Greece when we did some work with the international teams but we still got the chance to relax

S: We talked a lot about the past but I never ask you guys **how this project influenced your future** because I remember exactly that that was the time when I realized that I wanted to be a psychologist

M: It also helped me **I learned how to work in a team** and it's crazy to think that I first started out as a waiter and now I have my own company

R: I have a similar story the experience that this project gave me with all the videos and photos that I took they really **helped me in becoming a photographer**

T: I think that during this project I specially got to learn how to be more observant and this truly helps me in my job

I: I was just thinking in about two weeks I have some free time do you guys want to meet up again?

T: Yes and you know that would be really cool if we visited the places that we changed in our project

S: I can't wait to meet again

I: Me too!

"It's true that you can never know the impact of small things and you can never know how something will change your life until the change has already settled in. Even though these five kids what are the ones that

we need to change others' lives there is no doubt that this mission also change their life. To analyze this change I am why did you tag along on their meeting in the future?"

The narrator's thoughts (Sofia)

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders)**

Students worked together with teachers, with the support of the school administration. They have also enlisted the municipality office and local NGOs to support their mission implementation.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive and/or agentic)**

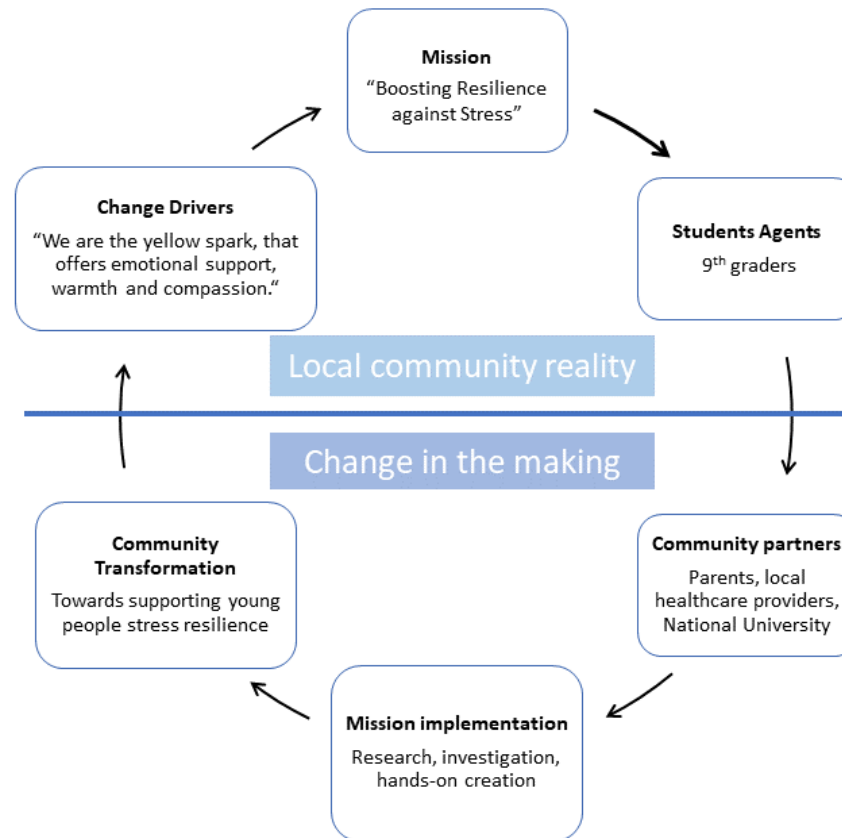
Specific knowledge skills included ICT (e.g., video shooting and editing), social skills included teamwork and collaboration as well as communication and self-regulation.

Science was experienced and applied in tasks as: (botanic) how to plant lavender in specific conditions, (math) how to measure and construct a wood fence, (chemistry) how to combine and use different paintings for exterior Wall, (art) how to create chess board and chairs from used tyres.

- **Benefit to the community**

"The City Hall Oradea supported a lot our mission here. Even if they are quite severe with the authorizations, they found our idea very useful for teens: the develop their belonging feeling in an historical place in Oradea (Parcul 1 Decembrie). This mission had the wished result and made the wanted impact: our collaborators declared that they were really proud of our work and are very happy to see the students taking action. The elders manifested their gratitude and thanked the students even while working. Also, we observed a big number of social media posts and pictures showing admiration and praising our work. A lot of press articles wrote about us and lauded our implication in the community's wellbeing. The local community members were happily after our first mission." (*Teacher's reflection, benefit of the mission for the local community*).

Scenario 2 - Boosting Resiliency against Stress



Click on the image for a video recollection of the mission's implementation (also here <https://youtu.be/TSXmrp6g51Q>)

- **Call to make a change - "Boosting Resiliency against Stress".**

"Once upon a time there was a lost little spark that was searching for keepers, it carried a burning wish to bring good to the local community. This spark was brought by the wind to our school, "Don Orione" Highschool, where it found a group of young people that

offered it shelter and took care of it. The wish grew every day, and, after a short period of time, it became reality. 10 of us, being a perfect home for this wish, got an Agents of Change attitude. This way, we spread the wish further, surrounding ourselves by enthusiastic people: students, teachers, partners. The spark within our souls made us true detectives, because we identified two very important missions for our community. In the first one we did wonderful things in the parks within the city, but... after a while the wellbeing of our community was shaken by the war within the neighbour country. We, as agents of change, couldn't and weren't allowed to stay passive to the panic manifested by our community.

So, we decided **to educate the youngsters' attitude in major stress situations**. Everyone came up with ground-breaking ideas, so we searched for a place where us and all our ideas could fit. We chose the 10 Hotare Refuge, where we decided to divide ourselves into 3 departments: Emotional support, Survival Tips, Behaviour Management.

Now that we had all the ideas put together, we had to choose the way of transmitting the messages and information to the young people, so we planned another meeting where we could merge our sparks to bring light in our way. The departments started creating a series of educational videos.

Chapter I Emotional Support. We are the yellow spark, that offers emotional support, warmth and compassion. We began our activity with discussions about emotions we felt in certain stressful situations, in order to know each other better and to select the videos' themes: Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, Stage Fright, How to Ask for Help, Panic Attack. During the discussions we managed to open up to each other, we balanced each other, but we also had a great deal of fun. After this stage we put together the videos' scenarios and then we organized two filming sessions, because an agent of change has to also be an actor :).

Chapter II Survival Tips. We are the green spark; we offer knowledge about survival and first aid. We broke the ice with discussions about the way we reacted in different emergency situations, and then we agreed on the videos' topics (the most common major stress situations: Unconscious Person, Bone Fractures, Fire and Burns, Earthquake) and the first aid techniques needed in every case.

Before we filmed the videos, we made a trailer with the purpose of creating suspense and raising curiosity. The second filming session included the filming of the 4 videos mentioned earlier. It took place a bit later, after the Healthy Reactions Week (an event meant to prepare us for teaching others). But you will find more about it later.

Chapter III Behaviour Management. We are the blue spark, and we have the purpose to find pragmatic solutions, to anchor ourselves into reality, even if there is panic around us. Within the first meeting of our department, we chose the themes for the videos and we planned their filming (Adapting to New, Tragic News-Death, Street Violence, Finding a Diagnostic- Cancer). Our activity was a bit different because the spark within some members was fading and the wish became smaller. We remained a few, but like magic, we reunited our sparks, and we filmed the materials, cheerfully actually.

The departments' meetings didn't go as planned, though... every department encountered difficulties and in many cases we needed to improvise, to restructure our ideas or to reschedule meetings. Many people left the mission along the way and very few stayed focused. We felt how the burning wish was slowly fading and we didn't have enough oxygen to keep it alive... But, right at our worst moments, new members joined the group, and they gave us a breath of fresh air, cheering us up. We had a bonding moment on the occasion of The Healthy Reactions Week. There we learned new things, but we also rediscovered each other.

Healthy Reactions Week. Our teachers organized this event with the purpose to inspire and help us regarding the departments' videos. The participants were students and teachers from all over our school and specialists who taught us different skills and useful techniques during some workshops. The week had an energetic debut: the "Reactions" Flash-mob (flash mob) and it ended the same way: with the Graduation Party, organized by teachers for the student participants to the week.

Open Doors Day. We made workshops where we demonstrated for approximately 300 students from other schools what we learned during the "Healthy Reactions Week".

The Ending. To bring closure to our mission we reunited to the 10 Hotare refuge (approximately 90 people) and we organized a mini camp. We carried out different educational and creative activities (maybe too many- we learned to think more critically and to be more selective) and we spent beautiful and relaxing moments together.

Moral of the story. If you want to succeed, let your wishes expand beyond your imaginations and make them real!"

The narrator's thoughts (Iulia)

- **Support needed (school + stakeholders).**

Local university (e.g., medical students), Red Cross, municipality office, teachers and parents.

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive/agentive).**

How to provide first aid in case of convulsions and fainting - ISU.

How to prevent/combat the professional/school failure.

How to laugh – the effective means in combating the “nocebo”.

How to react in case of the mass-panic phenomenon.

Some self-defence techniques.

How to react in the case of tragic news.

How to treat burns and fractures.

- **Curricular integration.**

An entire week for healthy reactions in different stress situations was organized. Students and teachers learned how to react in a healthy way, being trained by different specialists (doctors, psychologists, sociologists, actors and entrepreneurs). After this week, teachers from different classes (Romanian Language, English, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History) organized lessons connected with the mission topic: *Boosting Resiliency against Stress*.

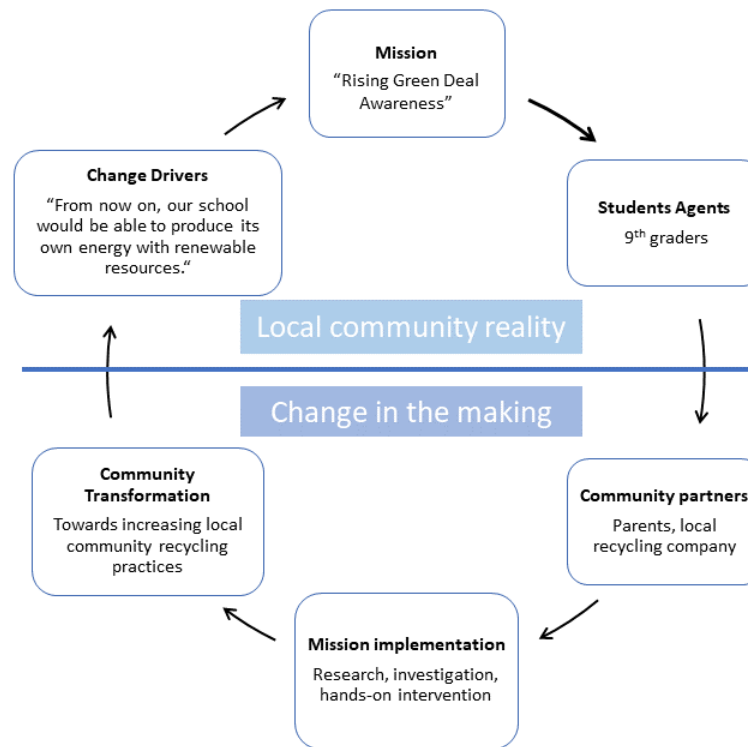
- **Benefit for the community.**

The implementation of this mission resulted in:

- A short workshop “How to provide first aid in case of fainting and choking with food” organized by our agents of change students for 250 primary school students from Liceul Don Orione.
- A short workshop “How to provide first aid in case of fainting and choking with food” organized by our agents of change students for around 300 gymnasium students from 6 different schools from Oradea. This activity was organized with the occasion of the Open school doors Days.
- A short publication (printed and online version) considering the healthy reactions in 17 different stress situation.

Turkey

Scenario 1 - Rising Green Deal Awareness



Click on the image to watch a video of the activities of this mission (also here https://youtu.be/vnr3g5xu_0s)

- **Call to make a change - Rising Green Deal Awareness**

"Sometimes what we are looking for is just right in front of our eyes. But being this close and in it can prevent us from noticing. This is also the same for problems. An external intervention may be required to realize some facts whose effects have not reached us yet. This is exactly what happened to us as Ortaköy students.

Are you ready for an enlightenment story???

Our school is located in a very big area with 3 large buildings. Although we are a little outside of Ankara, we are a family of about 1000 people. We are like a big family that is together 5 days a week, eats together, travels together, warms up together and lives together. But something happened that had never happened before. Something crazy has happened, not just for us, but for the whole world. We had to put distances, times, masks between us. Yes, the disaster you predicted. Covid 19 :(

We were all trying to figure out how this event started from one place and how we should fight it from another place, in very serious bewilderment. How come we can't leave our homes when technology is so advanced? How could such a small creature overtake us? We are the HUMANKIND. We are at the top. We dominate all of nature by shaping it as we want. We, we, we. But nature did not belong to the human race. A wise scientist, Hubert Reeves, explained perfectly "We're at war with nature. If we win, we're lost." Our return to school took a long time, but the pandemic was not the only reason. Our school was practically destroyed. Windows, walls, doors... We were waiting for our school to reopen in great amazement and despair. We were caught between a gigantic construction and a cellular creature. And that was exactly the magical moment when the light bulbs went on for our project.

Do you wonder HOW?

While thinking about the causes of the pandemic, we were thinking too much about how to protect nature. It was not enough just to protect mother nature. We had to make others protect and respect the workings of nature. We should have understood the songs she is singing to us, sensing her anger, and appreciating her generosity. But what could we do? Which path should we follow? Who could we get support from? What should we care about?

The answers to all these questions lay in the energy efficiency project in our school. The buildings of our school were renovated within the scope of the "Green Deal" and became a very important example in terms of energy efficiency. From now on, our school would be able to produce its own energy with renewable resources, and all lighting and heating systems would be made with the most ecologically efficient materials. Our task was to first understand all these developments and then spread them to our environment as widely as possible. Who better to tell a story we've experienced face-to-face than we can?

For this, we first distributed the tasks among our teams. Our long break slowed down some wheels of the machine. But we quickly recovered our motivation. We had to do something together to have a better team spirit. With the help of our friends who designed the logo of the project before, we made a great t-shirt design. Now we can more easily explain who we are.

After determining our mission, we had to determine what we had to do to reach our new goals. First of all, we had to burn the light we wanted to spread within ourselves. What is the green consensus? Why is it important? What will be changed in our school? All of our teammates, together, started to research and consult with the experts in our school. With each piece of information we learned, we realized how little we knew. We were both educating ourselves and talking about how we should tell people.

We had to be a part of the change we wanted to see. That's why we started to change our environment first. We placed our recycling bins in various parts of our school. We immediately started the recycling hunt. We started to explain, show and practice the differences between waste and recycling materials throughout the school.

Without wasting any time, we started to tour our local environment. We were like a gang with our masks, gloves, glasses and t-shirts. We visited our neighbour primary school. The joy in the children's eyes was worth seeing when we placed the recycling bins in the primary school near us. Although their happiness source was receiving new boxes in their classroom, they did not realize that they had

received a gorgeous gift for their future.

Our local environment, of course, was not enough. We decided to travel around Ankara and shine our light. Naturally, we did not travel with containers in our hands. We made a smarter choice and designed the flyers. Thus, we left everyone with a memory that they can carry with them.

Is Ankara enough for us? [I think you know the answer: NO, of course.](#)

We must apologize to mother earth to end the war with nature.
WE ARE SURE SHE WILL FORGIVE!"

(Student narrative describing their mission).

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive/agentive).**

Data research and editing, ICT skills, environmental awareness, saving natural resources, working collaboratively, communication skills.

- **Curricular integration.**

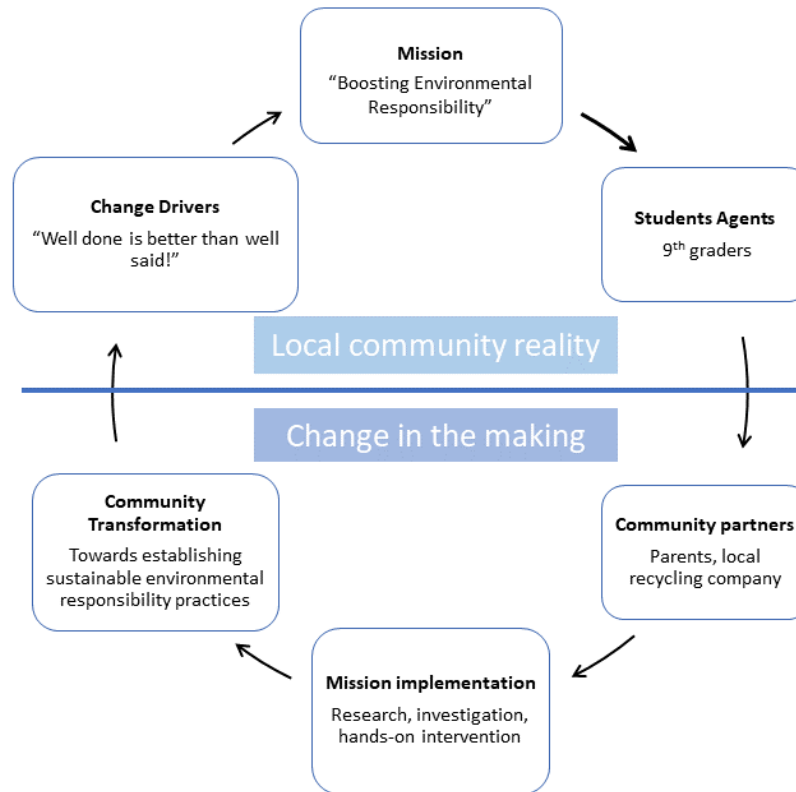
In the Turkish education system, there is an "environmental education course" in secondary education. This course is carried out purely theoretically. The skills gained and developed by the students have been realized as an application of this course and have contributed to the increase of self-learning skills and permanent learning. The students had design software subjects in order to have creative and attractive promotional materials.

- **Benefit for the community.**

Everyone wants to beautify the environment they live in and transform it into a sustainable form. People who respect the ecosystem and take care of the living space of all living things are appreciated. So how can we increase the number of these people? Of course, by disseminating the decisions taken as a result of scientific studies.

The mission's social media posts and especially the promotional materials distributed attracted the attention of the public. The thought of "What can I do alone?" in society was replaced by the thought of "There are young people we can stand together." *(Teacher's reflection, benefit of the mission for the local community).*

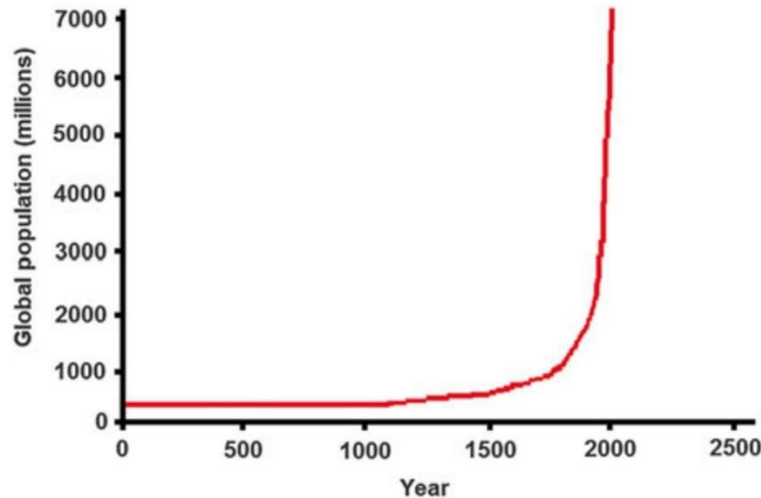
Scenario 2 - Boosting Environmental Responsibility



Click on the image to watch a video of this mission (also here <https://youtu.be/xyx21gL7MR8>)

- **Call to make a change**

"Once upon a time, the world had a beauty that we could not even imagine. With its magnificent nature, rich plant and animal diversity, and untouched forests with plenty of oxygen, it was a centre of attraction for all living things in the universe. The life cycle had a perfect balance; the water cycle, the carbon dioxide cycle, the conversion of organic waste by nature and almost everything else was flawless. Underlying this perfection was the use of the world by every living thing as much as it needed. In other words, every



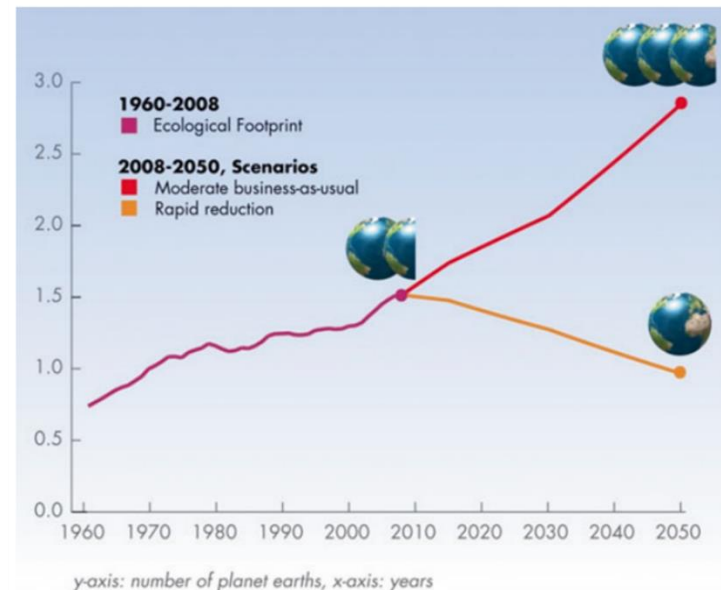
The hockey stick (exponential) growth curve of global population.

Source : IPCC WG1-AR4 Report (IPCC 2007).

Trend in the global average ecological footprint measured in Earths per person 1970– 2050. Two predicted scenarios, the red line is moderate growth (i.e. medium growth [as shown in the figure](#)), and the yellow line a rapid decline in population growth which is now thought to be very unlikely.

Of course, we would be happy to have more friends in the world with whom we can chat and interact, but the problem is of course different. The increase in the number of people meant an increase in consumption, competition, energy needs and living spaces. As the smartest creature in the world, humans thought it was a wise business to seize the habitats of other living things in order to create a living space for themselves. This meant the extinction of other living things, and the life cycle was thus disrupted. The fact

living thing hunted as much as it needed, ate as much as it needed, cultivated as much as it needed and consumed as much as it needed. In our old world, which has been able to maintain this delicate balance for millions of years, the human population has increased in the form of hockey stick in the last 500 years, [as seen in the figure](#).



Source : Global Footprint Network.
<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/>

that there is only one white rhinoceros for 200 million people in the world today must be the most important picture that some things are irreversibly lost. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) 2010 report, humankind needed 18 billion hectares of land to live and dispose of their garbage in 2007. However, in those years, there was only 11.9 billion hectares of usable land in the world! Today, we use 1.5 worlds, which is predicted to be equal to approximately 3 worlds in 2050. This, of course, brings with it many negativities such as much more use of agricultural lands, destruction of forests for new living spaces, more garbage being thrown into the environment for increased consumption of people, increased energy need, and increased use of natural resources. The increase in environmental pollution causes the rapid disappearance of clean food and water resources. The situation is so serious that while there have been wars for energy in the past centuries, scenarios are being prepared that there will be wars for clean water in the future.

However, there is no need to worry. There are two solutions to this problem. First, the human population also has a maximum, which may have already been exceeded! Due to many reasons such as rapidly increasing consumption, environmental pollution, global warming, lack of clean water and food sources, the human population may decrease rapidly and the world may eventually return to its perfect cycle and make the world liveable again. Although it may seem like a quick solution, most of us do not want it because it is scary.

The second is that people become really sensitive about the environment and act by thinking about the environment in everything they do. However, this is not something that can only happen by writing and saying beautiful sentences. Although many educational contents such as articles, scientific articles, TV programs and public service announcements on the environment have been prepared in the last century, it is an inevitable fact that environmental problems are still increasing. When it comes to the environment, it seems that verbal advice does not work. States publish public service announcements, regulations and legislation in order to promote recycling and protect nature. The importance of recycling and the negative effects of these harmful wastes on the environment are explained many times in many stages of school education. However, as a proverb says, **“Well done is better than well said!”** 16 of us and school management, as change detectives, started out with this motto and we understood that we need to take action not only with words but also with actions, and that we can only create a lasting impact and awareness in the society in this way, and we started to work. As change detectives, we took action to establish environmental responsibility awareness and make it permanent in the society:

- First at our own school
- Then, at the nearest primary school to our school.
- And then in the village where our school is located

We tried to work by applying the awareness of waste recycling to the society. We sorted the garbage in the school garden into classes. Meanwhile, other students who saw us came to support and help us instead of just looking with curious eyes. Thus, we also exchanged information with them. Everyone stated that they wanted to implement a similar practice around their own home. As we do in our own school, we sorted the garbage in the primary school garden into classes. For security reasons, we did not allow the little ones who

wanted to help us this time. But we have answered all the questions of these little enthusiasts. Later, we collected the wastes on the village roads and stored them according to their classes, we informed the village people, we went to the tradesmen and created awareness about the activity and waste recycling.

We made a brochure design. We divided into groups and distributed brochures in various regions of Ankara and increased environmental awareness. We also spread our activities from social media accounts. Of course, it is important to create permanent awareness in people about the environment. Another pillar of this is to protect and respect the green. For this purpose, we, the change detectives, rolled up our sleeves again and organized a tree planting event around our school. Again, all curious eyes were on us and we were very pleased with it."

(Student narrative describing their mission)

- **Skills/competences to be gained (cognitive/agentive).**

Collaboration, communication, teamwork, leadership, Environmental awareness, saving resources, courage, guidance.

- **Curricular integration.**

In the Turkish education system, there is an "environmental education course" in secondary education. This course is carried out purely theoretically. The skills gained and developed by the students have been realized as an application of this course and have contributed to the increase of self-learning skills and permanent learning.

- **Benefit for the community.**

"As a result of these activities, we were able to create a widespread impact. Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education shared our activities on its official twitter account as news. We believe that we have achieved our goals on this path we set out as change detectives.

The residents of Ortaköy village saw the practices we carried out and started to implement them in their own environment, the curious little ones were impressed by our exemplary behaviour in the primary school where we practiced, and the people who spent time in the picnic areas around the blue lake gained environmental awareness.

In order to reach more people and spread this effect, "Well done is better than well said!" We will continue our journey by embracing its motto. " *(School team reflection, benefit of the mission for the local community).*

3

General Insights



During the development and implementation of Schools as Drivers of Change, and other related 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 innovations.

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.

Pioneer Schools

Schools participating in European projects as Schools as Drivers of Change, and similar, 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.

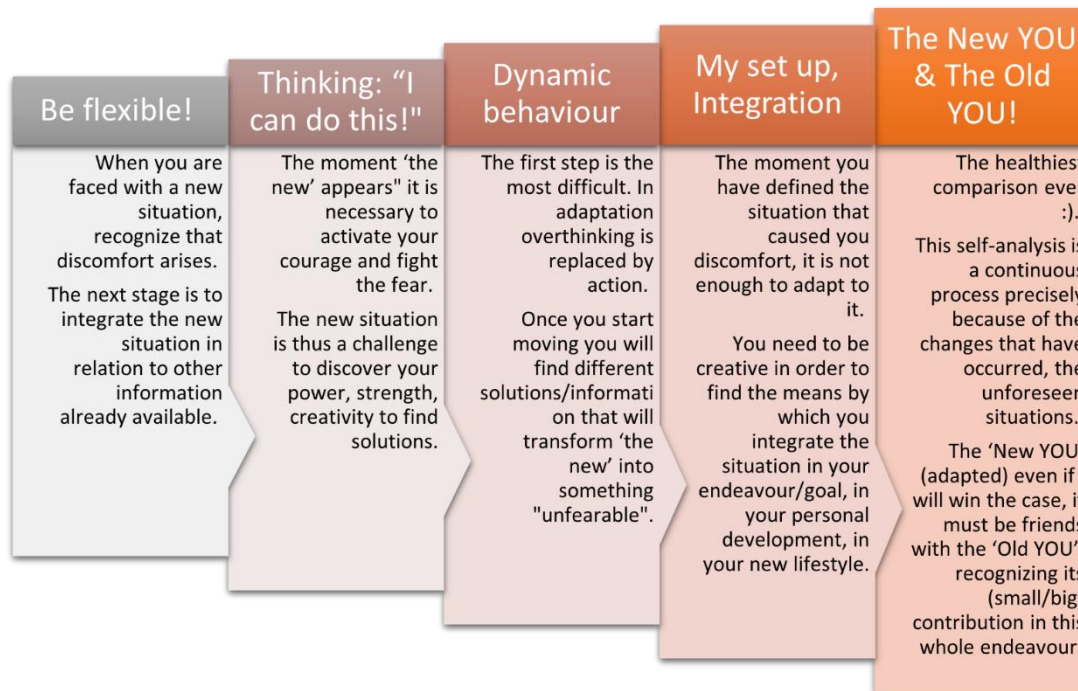
The following sub-chapters provide practical insights into the concepts of 'students as role models', 'agentic teachers and 'school as driver of change' along with many useful tips on how to turn the idea of a school as a driver of change into reality.

Students as Role-models

Now, to become such pioneer and role-model schools, the schools precisely need the specially **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.

How to be a change agent? The Romanian Team has provided us with 10 important traits to develop:

I. Adaptability. A change agent is adaptable. "If you can adapt to any situation, under any conditions, nothing will take you by surprise. It is not the strongest or the most intelligent species that survives, but the one that best adapts to change." (Agent of Change Bogdan, Romanian Team). How can you develop your adaptability?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► Train your adaptability skill!

- Think of three (unexpected) events that could happen when you are on a hike.
 - Write a list of objects and/or strategies that would help you adapt.
 - Remember the list and use it the next time you go hiking.
- (Exercise created by student Sofia Lupsa)*

II. Active listening. A change agent listens actively. "Do you want us to have a beautiful and united community? Then let's listen with empathy to those around us, thus trying to discover what problems they have and help them solve them." (Agent of Change Iulia, Romanian Team). How can you develop your active listening skill?

Pay attention to body language!

- keep your hands beside the body;
- sustain visual contact;
- encourage non-verbal communication.

Be careful what you say!

- when you listen you don't speak;
- do not show the intention to contradict;
- ask questions to clarify, elaborate or find solutions.

Mind your mood while listening.

- be calm and quiet;
- respect the person, the emotion and the opinion of the person speaking to you;
- show that the subject addressed by the person speaking is important for you at that moment.

(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

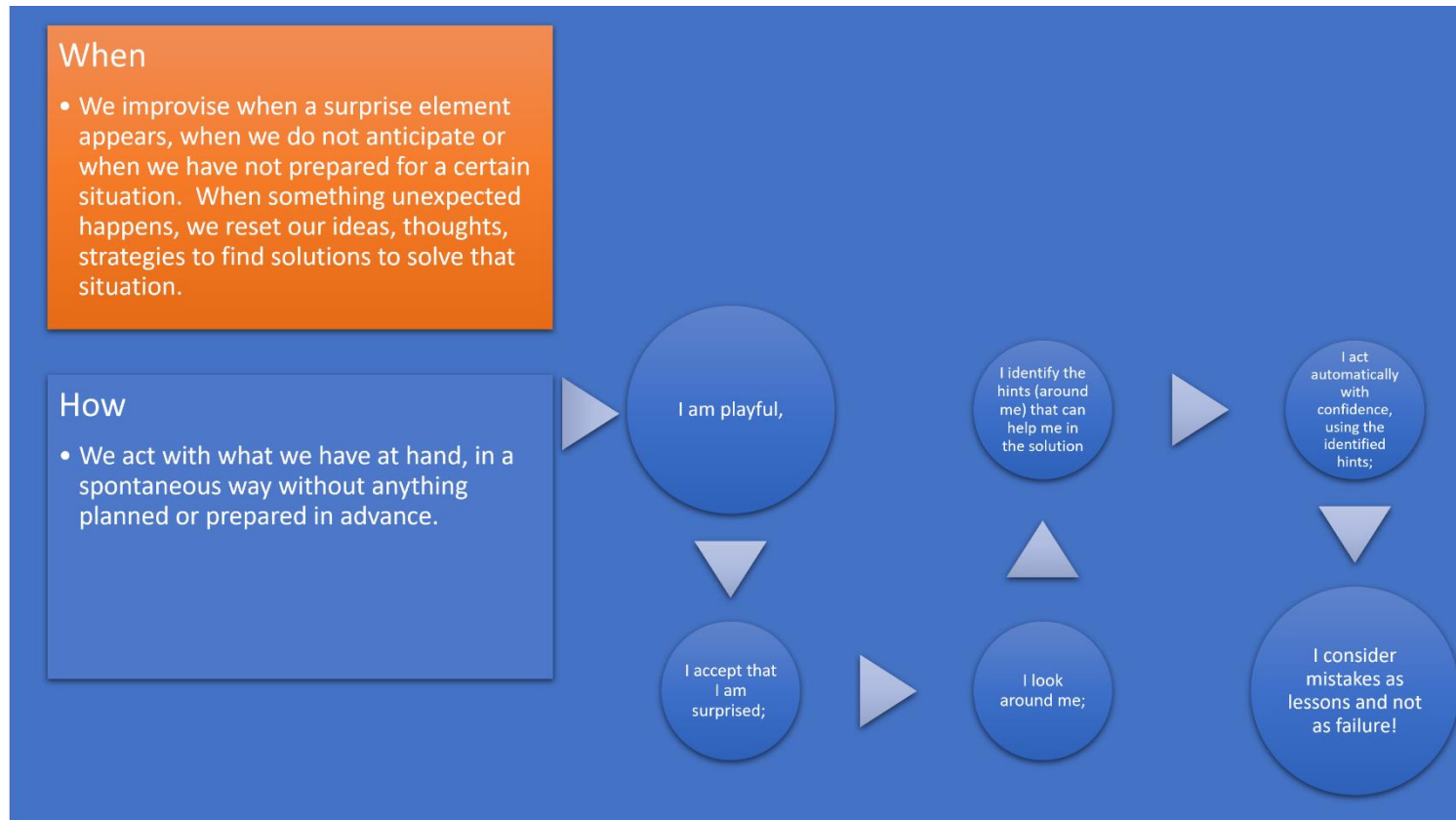
► **Train your active listening skill!**

Imagine the following situation: your friend tells you how s/he spent her/his vacation.

- Write a sentence that makes your friend sure you understand him/her.

→ Continue by writing three questions to encourage the development of the discussion.
(Exercise created by student Sofia Lupsa)

III. Improvisation. A change agent improvises. "Improvisation goes hand in hand with creativity and imagination. Someone who improvises looks for sources in everything that surrounds him: books, videos, internet, people, nature, etc." (Agent of Change Cristian, Romanian Team). How can you develop your active listening skill?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your improvisation skill!**

→ Think of an object and write it down on a piece of paper.

- Now, make up a game or short skit built around the object you were thinking about.
 - Write the skit or rules of the game. Don't forget to try the game with your friends.
- (Exercise created by student Sofia Lupsa)*

IV. Love for nature. A change agent loves nature. "I enjoy daily the presence of the blackbirds that come to wash their feathers in my pond. I feed my pets daily and watch them with love. I want to live in a healthy, green environment and I will get involved in such projects!" (Agent of change Stefan, Romanian Team). How can you connect with the environment?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your love for nature skill!**

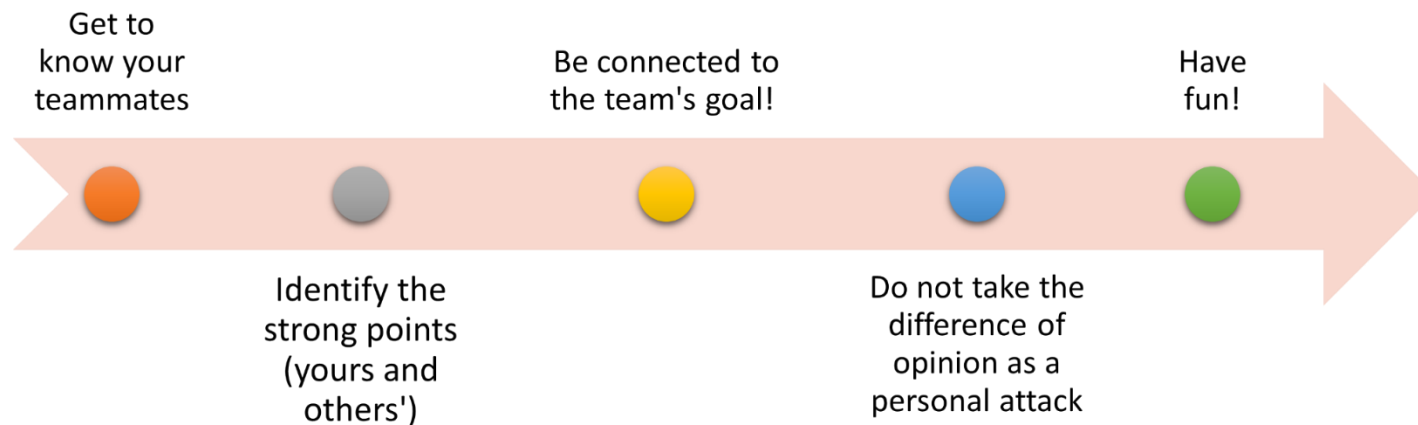
→ Go for a walk in the yard or in front of the building.

→ Observe the plants and animals you encounter on your way.

→ When you return home, try to bring a little nature into your home. You can plant a flower and place the pot on the windowsill, or you can adopt a small fish.

(Exercise created by student Sofia Lupsa)

V. Teamwork. A change agent works as a team. "Our mission is to bring as much change as possible to the community. And to have the best possible result, teamwork becomes crucial. We need you to succeed!" (Agent of Change Mike, Romanian Team).
What do you need to do to be an active part of your team?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your love for nature skill!**

→ Write a list of five very important rules that you must follow to encourage yourself to be active in your team.

(Exercise created by student, Sofia Lupsa)

VI. Open-mind. A change agent is open-minded. "An open-minded person is more casual, courageous, determined, and open to new horizons. Sounds good, right?" (Agent of Change Tania, Romanian Team). How can you be more open-minded?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your open-mindedness skill!**

→ Write down three new experiences you want to try in the near future – it can be a new hobby, meeting a new person or trying something you have not done before. Plan your new experiences!

(Exercise created by student Bianca Morar)

VII. Organization. A change agent is organized. "Is your room a disaster? Is your desk full of books and glasses, the bed unmade, the closet messy? During online school, after spending more time at home, I felt the need to be more organized." (Agent of Change Cristi, Romanian Team).

How can you be more organized?

Choose at least one method from the list below, and after it works, add another, and then another, until the results go from visible to meaningful!

1. Visualize the things around you by category.
2. Sort by categories when the pile appears (of objects, tasks, responsibilities).
3. Let each thing have its "home".
4. Eliminate what is unnecessary.
5. Write down what you have to do.
6. Make a schedule with deadlines.
7. Act on schedule.

(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your organization skill!**

→ Organize your week ahead, from your morning routine to your sleep schedule.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

(Exercise created by student Bianca Morar)

VIII. Sociability. An agent of change is sociable. "We can make a difference in the community! And for this we must be open, sociable, express our opinions and everything that we consider should (and can) be changed." (Agent of Change Blanka, Romanian Team). How can you be more sociable?

- 1. Be positive!** - We want to be surrounded by optimistic, happy people who, even if they encounter difficulties, are focused on solutions. Everyone can name the problems, but YOU be the one who also identifies the solutions.
- 2. Be involved!** - In moments of social interaction, we must show interest in what the other communicates to us. Avoid sitting on the phone when someone is talking to you, enter the topic of the conversation!
- 3. Body language** in harmony with the interest in the discussion! - Sustained eye contact, open body posture, attention to the topic of conversation, use of questions will make you a pleasant conversation partner.

4. Initiate interactions! - Socialization is built through a mutual effort on the part of everyone. Look for topics of common interest, build opportunities for joint activities, spend time surrounded by people.

5. Embrace opportunities to meet new people! - While the appearance of strangers causes some embarrassment, intimidation, our skills are challenged to cope with these discomfort states.

(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your sociability skill!**

→ Challenge yourself and start a conversation with a person you have never spoken to before.

→ Write down how you want to start the conversation and what information you want to find out.

(Exercise created by student Bianca Morar)

IX. Leadership. A change agent has a spirit of a leader. "Do you want to be a leader? Then your eyes and ears open! You can make a difference in your community! Get started, YOU, TODAY! You can start by supporting your family, friends and everyone around you. We are all going through a difficult period, and a smile given today can cause ten more smiles! Ask your loved ones how they are and if they need a helping hand! Change starts with you! Be a person to be proud of, and people will follow your example." (Agent of Change Bianca, Romanian Team). How to develop your leadership skills?



(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your leadership skill!**

→ Try to make decisions yourself. Grit your teeth and decide for yourself.

→ Communicate decisions to those around you and observe their reactions.

→ Your top three next changes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(Exercise created by student Bianca Morar)

X. Observation. An agent of change has a good spirit of observation. "I think that... if from now on when we walk down the street, we do it with our eyes open, developing our spirit of observation and by looking for things we can improve, we will be a more united community with a more beautiful city." (Agent of Change Sofia, Romanian Team). How can you develop your spirit of observation?

Stop your thinking here and now!

- Through this exercise you develop your self-observation skills.
- When you say: "Stop thinking!" pay attention to what you are feeling, how your heart is beating, how your breathing is, how the atmosphere is around you, how you are resonating with what is around you.

Watch with your eyes!

- Your eyes follow what surrounds you, and what you see needs to be processed.
- Do not stare blankly, this makes it difficult to process the present, leaving many important things unnoticed.

Be analytical!

- The moment you see something, process it into smaller particles, identify some details.
- It is important to process something as a whole, but the analysis of details can lead to more objective conclusions and the discovery of the essential.

Accept instead of judging!

- The mission of an observer is not to issue judgments, but to understand and accept what s/he observes.
- Empathy is the process that helps acceptance and helps us understand (points of view, emotions, reactions, problems, difficulties, consequences, etc.). That's the only way we find effective solutions!

(Romanian Team psychologist, Ioana Drugas)

► **Train your observation skill!**

→ Scan your room with your eyes. Although it seems very familiar, try to see it from a new perspective.

→ Write down five new things you noticed.

(Exercise created by student Bianca Morar)

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.

Mireia Masgrau, Working with Europe SME

Agentic Teachers

During the project development, we had the opportunity to understand, through the eyes of the students, what kind of nurturing environment they need to successfully become agents of change. A cornerstone to support this process is the teacher's role. The students indicated to need a star agentic teacher who is inspirational, knowledgeable, student-focused, supportive and open-minded. See the animation above to discover more!

Game-based Support

Being an agentic teacher is not a trivial task. The teachers participating in the Schools as Drivers of Change project developed in-time support through boardgames to help other teachers find their way and overcome hurdles.

The created games are accessible [via the project website](#)

Community Collaboration Board Game

This is a game designed to support teachers in their journey to build strong collaboration with local community stakeholders.

Aim. To improve the community collaboration. The aim of the game is to get to the end. Asking help is the key to the success.

Players: 2-9

Age: 7+

Materials: game board, dice, agent figures

You can access [the game here](#).

The game was co-designed and co-created by:

Annikka Juutinen (UEF Teacher Training School, Joensuu, Finland)

Jaana Räisänen (UEF Teacher Training School, Joensuu, Finland)

Lavinia Halász (Don Orione, Romania)

EduDriver Board Game

Are you a teacher? Do you like traveling? Would you like to explore different learning systems, methodologies and activities outside your school curriculum? Then this is a game for you! Open Science Schooling is here to open a new world in front of you! Would you be lucky enough to reach your goals?

Aim. The aim of the game is to include OSS methodology and activities into the school curriculum and overcome any obstacles that will come into your way. The winner is the player that reaches quarter 34 first.

Players: 4

Ages: 6+

Materials: game board, dice, agent figures

You can access [the game here](#).

The game was co-designed and co-created by:

Liudmila Gertune (Pasvalio School, Lithuania)

Janne Heiskanen (UEF, Teacher Training School Joensuu, Finland)

Eugenia Moysidou (Platon School, Greece)

Levent Hıdır (Teknik Anadolu Lisesi, Turkey)

Rebels Board Game

The Rebel boardgame wants to reveal the real school life of students. The players (students or teachers as well) cross 43 situations which can motivated or demotivate the students. The students` motivation in school activities is a topic often analyzed and debated by teachers. It is more and more hard to motivate students to learn and also to do extracurricular activities in school. This game want to help students and teachers to connect each other and find solutions for the lack of motivation.

Aim. Giving concrete examples of what students can do to be more than a simple learner, to be an active member in their school environment and also in their community.

Players: 2-4

Age: 10+

Materials: game board, dice, agent figures, coloured cards

You can access [the game here](#).

The game was co-designed and co-created by:

Ioana Drugas (Liceul Don Orione, Romania)

Ilias Batzogiannis (Platon School, Greece)

Hanne Vähäköski (UEF Teacher Training School, Finland)

Neslihan Turan Solmaz (Teknik Anadolu Lisesi, Turkey)

Schools as Drivers of Change



A school that drives changes in its community is a school that first and foremost provides a **supportive environment** and creates **conductive conditions** internally for the students to nurture their agency to make changes in the world.

The school provides time and a psychologically safe space for the growth of students' ideas – a process that is nurtured by **inclusiveness and openness** and that is anchored in understanding that each student's idea matters.

At the same time, these nurturing conditions should challenge the students to **think unconventionally and innovatively, without any box**. This is supported by an attitude that welcomes mistakes as learning tools.

Such a school is full of passionate students and dedicated teachers. A school that is a driver of change also effectively demonstrates to the students that they can make a change, building their confidence and empowering them. The educational mission of a school that is a driver of change is to foster development of 'mindful citizens'.

School's relationship with its local community

As a driver of change, the school cultivates good relations with its community. This means that the school is attuned to the community needs and connected with its real-life issues. The school acts as a collaborative activist in the community by being involved in it through action and participation as well as responsiveness and solution-seeking to the community problems.

Most importantly, the school is a bridge between students and teachers and the

community.

School as a role-model of change

The school that inspires and leads change is a school that itself is open to change. This is supported and followed by other features such as being brave to try, open-minded and innovative in the change endeavour, determined in its effort, ready to learn from mistakes, and finally resilient in case of failure. The school understands that only by being a change role model, the school can drive changes in the world.

◆ TIPS!

When developing the school's capacity as a driver of change:

- ⇒ Show yourself in social media - demonstrate what kind of school you are, what you do, what is important to you.
- ⇒ Be a platform for the voices of the youth - adults, community are interested in hearing the opinions and views of the young. Social media may be a good platform to start from.
- ⇒ Observe and listen to what happens in your community.
- ⇒ Respond (positively) to your community needs.
- ⇒ Build your schools' community contacts - reach out to the community members in your vicinity.
- ⇒ Invite the community partners to school events.
- ⇒ Propose to organise a joint event to a community member.
- ⇒ Principals - incentivise teachers and students to community oriented work
- ⇒ Ensure infrastructural (incl. transportation) connection between the school and the community.

Benefits for the Wider Society

The implementation of the project has highlighted several practical benefits for the **school** as well as for the wider **society**. The school in general can benefit from having students more motivated in their learning, from having teachers supported sustainably by external experts as well as from implementing an improved curriculum which is anchored in real-life learning.

A school that actively collaborates with its local community educates **mindful citizens** while taking care of the growth and well-being of its community. Mindful citizens – who can see the needs of society, can find effective solutions and take initiative to begin any change needed. Mindful citizens can be best characterised by their collaborative attitude, agentic skills and concrete knowledge.

- **Collaborative attitude.** Proactive member of society with a strong sense of community belonging and responsibility for the societal matters.
- **Agentic skills.** Empowered and agentic young people that can communicate effectively, lead, adapt, can work together, perceptively observe and think critically.
- **Concrete knowledge,** related for instance to technology, climate change and natural environment as well as project management.

Furthermore, the ways in which school collaborates with its local community benefits the society well-being. Some examples the are present from this project implementation include:

- creation of public green spaces with personality
- taking care of community health (addressing nicotine addiction, promotion of immunization, developing emotional well-being through spreading kindness)
- stress management trainings and skills development
- keeping traditional skills and knowledge alive
- teaching and encouraging community to climate responsible and environmentally friendly behaviour.

4

Conclusions



What does it take for a school to be a driver of change in its community? A school that drives change in the community nurtures and cultivates agentic skills and attitudes of both its students and teachers. Providing them at the same time with collaborative opportunities with the community of which it is an active member.

In the community change process, **the role of the students is invaluable**. Collaborative initiatives are for them unique chances to develop their agentic skills. More importantly, students who are change agents pass on the skills and knowledge they have to the community they live in and work with. They truly lead by example. To support the students' development, however, agentic teachers are needed. Teachers who inspire and support collective actions and help in bringing forwards students' agencies and change competences.

This guide has showcased practical implementations of community change missions in several EU countries and Turkey, through which the schools walked the path of becoming drivers of change in their local communities. The hope of the project is that the processes and benefits described motivate and help other schools to successfully engage in similar activities.

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGY



THE SCHOOL AS DRIVER OF CHANGE – 21ST
CENTURY LEARNING FOR THE NEW
YOUNG STUDENT

Calkin Suero Montero and Joanna Bunikowska

In Collaboration with the Project Partners and School Teams
Erasmus+ Schools as Drivers of Change Project
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