SLIDE: Service-Learning as a pedagogy to promote Inclusion, diversity and Digital Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

The SLIDE project (1/01/22-31/12/24) is a collaboration between 7 Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and 3 Service-Learning networks. SLIDE aims to intertwine the Service-Learning (SL) pedagogy with Digital Empowerment (DE) to promote inclusion and diversity. The project brings together students and academics from a wide range of European universities to draw on existing practices, share knowledge and develop best practices in and with the community whereby all become teaching resources, problem solvers, and partners. The overall purpose of SL is to foster a sense of civic engagement and responsibility in students and to motivate them to produce positive social change, while the purpose of DE is to make an individual fit to the digital technology, placing that individual at the centre of teaching and drawing upon his personal experiences to engage him.

The project meets 3 needs of contemporary education, that came more apparent during the COVID-19 crisis:

- to digitally empower university teachers who should rapidly transform into learning experience designers and experts in emerging technologies;

- to close the gap between self-perceived and actual digital competences of university students by equipping them with appropriate skills and sensitizing them towards digital inclusion of underprivileged and underrepresented groups;
- to combine DE of teachers and students with S-L, while establishing connections between Higher Education Institutions and communities at risk, either in direct proximity or in remote areas.

The SLIDE project is targeted at HEI teachers, students and community organizations. In order to reach these stakeholders, different outputs will be developed over the project timeline:
- a Service-Learning and Digital Empowerment Manifesto that describes the needs and conditions for success of stakeholders for Service-Learning and Digital Empowerment;
- an e-learning module for teachers to improve their digital readiness and capacity within their teaching;
- an Online World Café for teachers to engage about Service-Learning and Digital Empowerment;
- an e-learning module for students to enhance their digital and social competences;
- a Social Hackathon for students in collaboration with the community to enhance their understanding of digital gaps, diversity and inclusion;
- a Virtual European Service-Learning and Digital Empowerment Hub to create an online space for disseminating knowledge on service-learning and digital empowerment in Europe.
- a policy report that explores the opportunities and thresholds for the interlinkage between Service-Learning and Digital Empowerment.

Keywords: Digital Empowerment, Service-Learning, Diversity & Digital Inclusion