



Building on
Linguistic and
Cultural Diversity



Being BOLD

Handbook of social action
and service learning in pre-service
teacher education

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Editorial

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This Handbook presents the outcomes of the BOLD project (2022–2025), which integrated service learning and social action into (language) teacher education across European universities. By engaging directly with multilingual communities, student teachers developed the skills and awareness to address linguistic and cultural diversity in schools and society. Structured in four sections - conceptual background, practical resources, ready-to-use templates, and lessons learned - this Handbook supports the implementation of socially engaged and action-oriented teaching practices.

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Executive Summary

This Handbook presents the main outcomes of the BOLD project – Building on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity for Social Action within and beyond European Universities – carried out from December 2022 to November 2025. The project aimed to integrate service learning and social action into (language) teacher education, offering student teachers direct engagement with multilingual communities within and beyond the schools. This experience was seen as essential for developing the skills and awareness needed to address linguistic and cultural diversity in both classrooms and broader society. This Handbook captures the project’s twofold mission: to promote student teachers’ civic engagement and to strengthen collaboration between universities and civil society. Structured in four main sections – conceptual background, practical resources, ready-to-use templates and lessons learnt – it aims to support the implementation of socially engaged teaching practices. It is intended for teacher educators, institutions, and teachers seeking to enrich education through social action and service learning.

01

Introduction

Introduction

In an increasingly globalised yet exclusionary world, teacher education must evolve to prepare (language) educators not only for pedagogical and subject-knowledge excellence but also for ethical engagement with complex societal issues.

The growing disparities and systemic inequalities demand a shift from traditional models of teacher education, based on knowledge transmission, towards transformative approaches that foster social responsibility and social justice (Biel & Esleben, 2025; Tavares, 2025), critical intercultural awareness (Susilo, Yang & Qi, 2023), and global citizenship (Lourenço & Simões, 2021).

All these concepts build on the necessity of educating teachers to critically evaluate sociocultural and sociolinguistic realities and act upon them. They go beyond identifying and interpreting explicit or implicit sociocultural values, assumptions and bias in education, embracing the ability to take action (Biel & Esleben, 2025)

Social action and service learning, as concepts that foster engagement and activism in teacher education programs (as shown in the next section), emerge as powerful pedagogical strategies to address those challenges. By integrating community engagement with academic learning in initial

teacher education, social action and service learning cultivate critical reflection, empathy, and a deeper understanding of and commitment with social justice. Pre-service teachers, through engagement with social action and service learning, get inspired to value difference and to respond constructively to the multifaceted realities of the communities they will serve. Such communities, as we see it, include the classroom and the immediate school context, but go beyond them (see section 2).

Additionally, educators should be equipped to navigate volatile and unpredictable political, social, demographic, and economic landscapes. This requires more than content knowledge; it calls for adaptive, reflective, and justice-oriented professionals who can respond to the needs of increasingly (linguistically) diverse and dynamic classrooms. A short Handbook dedicated to social action and service learning in pre-service teacher education can serve as a critical resource for fostering these competencies.

This Handbook is the result of activities carried out during the implementation of the BOLD project, between December 2022 and November 2025. BOLD is the acronym chosen for “Building on Linguistic and Cultural Diversity for social action within and beyond European universities”.

The BOLD project consists of a consortium of five universities and an R&D company specialising in social innovation and digital education (Web2Learn).

BOLD departed from the conviction that by embedding service learning and social action into teacher education, student teachers gain direct experience engaging with multilingual communities, allowing them to better understand and respond to the linguistic and cultural diversity in their future classrooms (Warren & Ward, 2024).

In other words, service learning and social action might help student teachers connect the multilingual reality of their future classrooms to broader issues of multilingualism in society. According to the above-mentioned rationale and departing points, the objectives of the BOLD project were:

✓ **Active Citizenship**

To support student teachers' active citizenship and civic engagement through the development of professional knowledge and competencies leading to social action and service learning;

✓ **Collaboration**

To promote the collaboration of HE institutions with civil society organisations and associations, through the implementation of service-learning and social action collaborative projects advocating for linguistic and cultural diversity.

This document, which aims to disseminate the most tangible results of the project in order to inspire social action and service-learning practices beyond the BOLD project team, is structured in four sections:

✓ **Conceptual background**

The core concepts that serve as a framework for the project include service learning and social action, being intertwined with others such as social justice, advocacy and activism. These concepts will be explained, illustrating how they served the objectives of the BOLD project and how they were operationalised throughout the project.

✓ **Resources**

Produced in the scope of the project, for implementing service learning and social action in pre-service teacher education: open-access modules, principles for service learning towards linguistic and cultural diversity in HE, and a toolkit for HE students and staff.

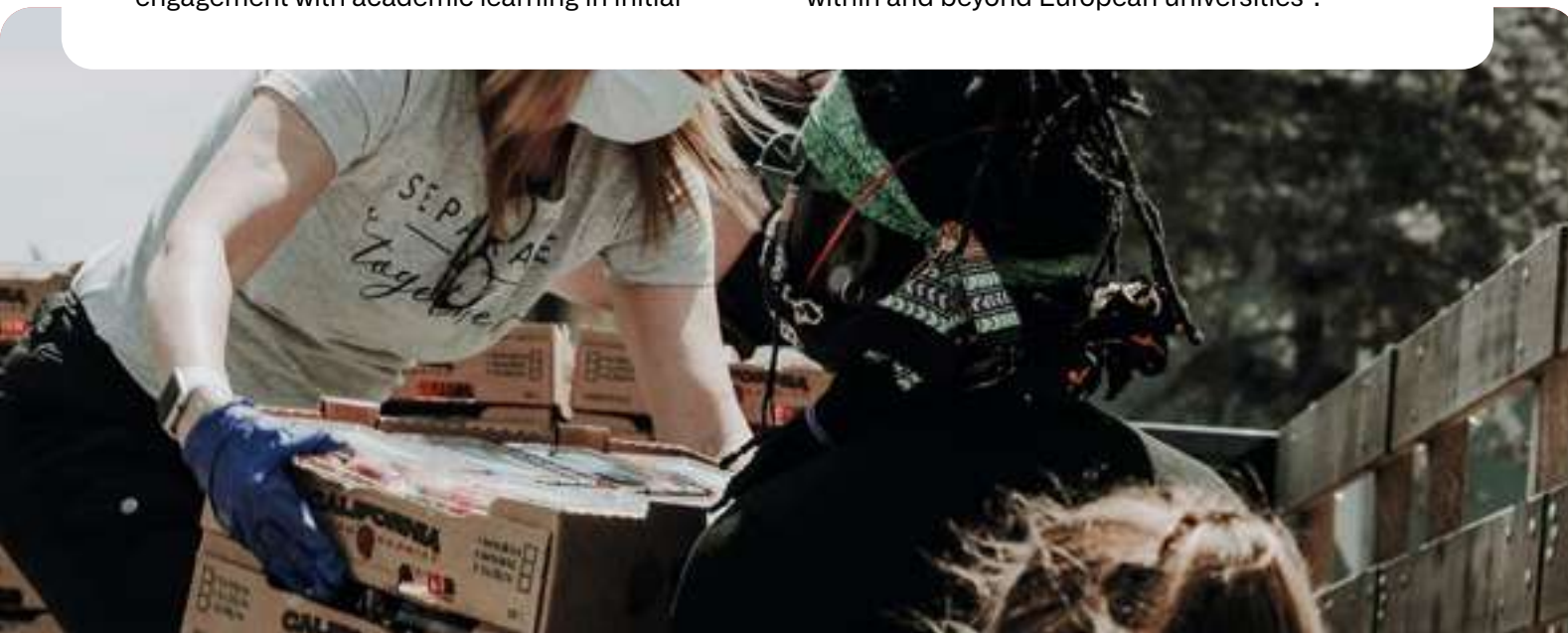
✓ **Templates**

For implementing service learning and social action in pre-service teacher education: ready-to-use tools to the curriculum integration of the online modules and support the design, implementation and monitoring of social action projects, illustrated through real examples from partner institutions.

✓ **Lessons learnt**

Challenges identified during projects' implementation are unveiled and discussed, allowing BOLD to propose ways forward leading to transfer and scalability possibilities.

Considering the sections of this Handbook and its objectives, we believe that it can be inspiring for institutional decision-makers and teacher educators who wish to introduce social action and service-learning practices in initial (and continuing!) teacher education programs. Similarly, the reflections and materials included here can encourage teachers in the field and/or in training to develop their own projects.



02

Social action and service learning in teacher education programs: the BOLD approach

This section introduces the BOLD approach to social action and service learning in teacher education programs. It is meant to be a holistic, future-oriented model that moves beyond resistance to offer proactive, justice-driven responses to inequality. Focusing on linguistic injustice as a cross-cutting issue, in sub-section 2.1

we argue that meaningful change requires action at the micro (classroom), meso (school), and macro (community) levels. Crucially, addressing such inequalities demands a multidisciplinary effort, embedding social justice across all areas of teacher preparation (section 2.2).



2.1

A holistic approach to social action and service learning

The BOLD project considers social action and service learning in pre-service teacher education as possible approaches to inspire future teachers to take action for social change. For the sake of this section, and because these are complex concepts (with the research sometimes emphasising “social”, “action”, “service” or “learning”), a distinction between these concepts is necessary²:

✓ Social action

Initially conceived as “action to help those who suffered the deprivations of poverty or homelessness, but also to benefit the wider society” (Pedler, 2020), it evolved to social processes in which “participants learn with and from each other and act outside the set with other people in their organisations and communities” (idem).

✓ Service Learning

An experiential educational method in which students engage in activities that address real human, social and environmental needs from the social justice perspective, by integrating community service with the curriculum to enrich learning in any degree, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities through action and critical reflection (EASLHE, 2021, in Aramburuzabala et al, 2024; also Aramburuzabala, 2022; Bringle, Clayton & Hatcher, 2013, p. 338).

Another proposal, which emerged in some European universities at the beginning of the 21st century with a social justice approach, is Service-Learning, a methodology that goes beyond the walls of the university connecting with the community and its needs, and contributing to improving society and, specifically, the lives of the most vulnerable people, but also connecting theory with practice to improve learning.

Despite the clear differences between these experiential approaches, both concepts underscore a need to act upon the contexts to achieve social good. From the definitions above, both service learning and social action are socially embedded practices, meaning that the presence of “others” is key to undertake action (Bringle, Clayton & Hatcher, 2013). Taking action can be directly at individual people or groups (advocacy) or toward broader social change (activism), even if the research sees these forms of teachers’ commitment as intertwined (Warren & Ward, 2024b, p. 6).

BOLD pursued those forms of social engagement (a development of “savoir d’engager”, in the intercultural competence as developed by Byram, 1997) in teacher education, by educating teachers “to commit to, pursue, and engage with activism in classrooms around the world” (Warren & Ward, 2024b, p. 2). Nevertheless, BOLD considers that activism should not be reduced to the classroom, in connection to specific subject knowledge, at the micro-level, but also encompass activism at the school and societal levels.

The conceptual background of the BOLD project therefore sees service learning and social action as experiential and research-based approaches in teacher education to address issues of social justice, linguistic and cultural diversity, at the micro, meso and macro level of teachers actions.

²Please refer to the glossary for the definition of further concepts.

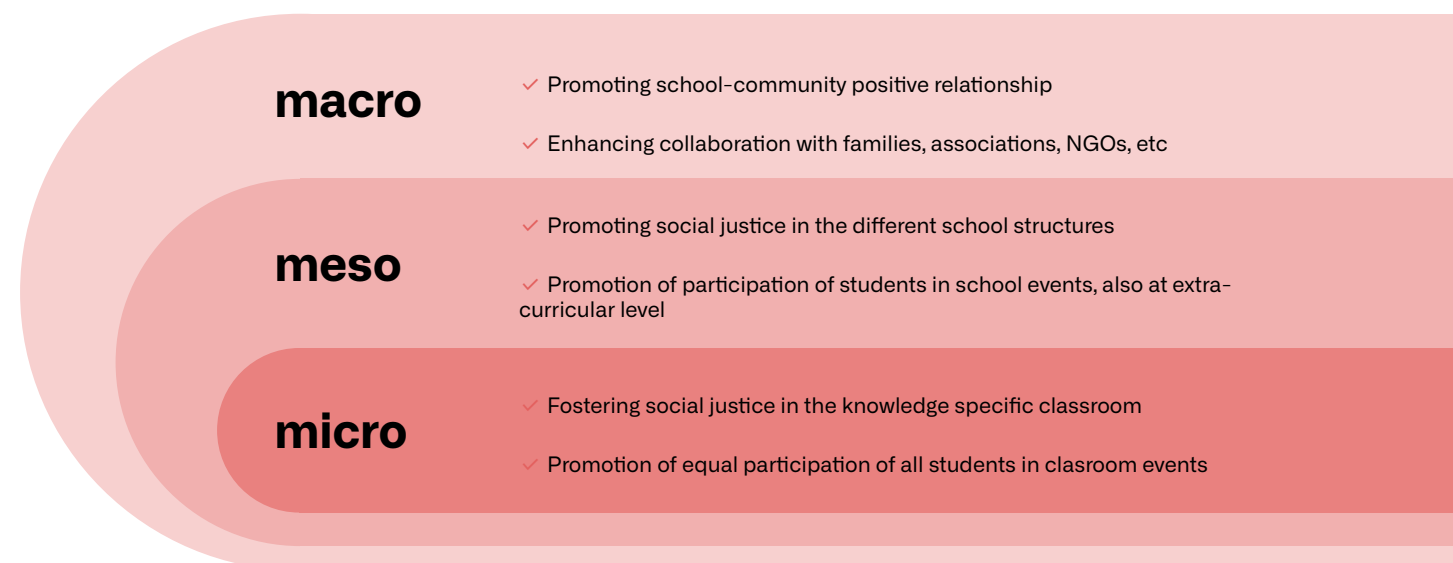


Figure 1 – Levels and aims of project implementation

Figure 1 visualises this conceptual background. It presents a multi-level framework (macro, meso, micro) that can be used to embed social action and service learning into teacher education programs. Each level reflects a scope of influence and action, helping future teachers engage with social justice and community involvement across various educational contexts. More specifically, at the micro level, pre-service teachers are called to design or participate in projects that promote equity and inclusion within their own subject area (e.g., designing inclusive lesson plans). In the scope of the BOLD project, this was visible through the design and implementation of linguistically and culturally responsive projects, dealing, for example, with opportunities of equal participation in the foreign language classroom for heritage speakers and speakers with other backgrounds. It was important to see that some participants were interested in mechanisms of inequities in assessment processes, which might jeopardise students' aspirations of accessing more prestigious career prospects. In this sense, monolingual and monoglossic assessment cultures were addressed in some projects.

The meso level focuses on the school as an institution. As a structure, the school might be embedded in cultures of working and teaching

and learning that sustain and reproduce systemic inequalities. At the meso level, pre-service teachers might engage in initiatives that connect them with school events, clubs, or governance and be called to develop projects that address school-wide issues of equity (e.g., inclusive extracurricular activities, peer mentoring programs or others). During BOLD implementation in Hamburg, pre-service language teachers engaged in uncovering inequalities in language exchange programs, challenging discourses of the added-value of students' international exchanges. More specifically, while analysing the participation of language students in an exchange programme designed and promoted by the school, student teachers uncovered the social reproduction of economic and social inequalities of such programs, which left some students out of exchange possibilities. Another example at this level involved a non-verbal card game designed and implemented by Biology and Geology student teachers from Aveiro, under the scope of a special educational needs course unit, that was intended to foster intercultural awareness, empathy and inclusion among pupils. The intentional absence of verbal communication generated emotional engagement and moments of tension, which later led to group discussions about cultural diversity and social exclusion, as reported by teachers who

observed the activity. Hence at the meso level, pre-service teachers are thus called to encourage student voice and participation in the school life, ensuring that all learners are (or can be) involved and heard, especially those from marginalised linguistic, social and economic backgrounds.

At the macro-level, BOLD considers the wider community beyond the school. While this was the most difficult level of implementation, pre-service teachers engaged in community-based research and service projects addressing local needs (e.g., literacy drives, specific groups touched by ableism, environmental campaigns). For example, in Thessaloniki, pre-service teachers learnt to navigate and contribute to school-community partnerships, fostering reciprocal relationships with an advocacy group addressing the needs of deaf citizens. Another example comes from Volos, also in Greece, where student teachers collaborated with the Juvenile Correctional Institution for Males, to co-create a shared space of emotional connection, critical reflection, and empowerment. While this level might be the most difficult to design projects to, because it challenges traditional boundaries of schooling and requires structural, cultural, and

pedagogical shifts in the way teacher education is seen, authors conceded that it is also where some of the most transformative service learning and social action can occur (Pedler, 2020). Indeed, when enacted at the broader social level, taking action might be considered the “origin of significant learning and the outcome point of that learning” (Pedler, 2020) and might have a broader social impact.

To wrap up, findings from the BOLD project highlighted that service learning empowers future language teachers with a better understanding of multilingual communities and classrooms, supporting the development of culturally and linguistically responsive teaching skills and potentially contributing to more inclusive, multilingual educational environments. More specifically, the study by Pinto, Melo-Pfeifer & Duarte (2025) emphasised the potential of service learning in bridging language teacher education programs and communities as to educate language teachers who are supportive of plurilingual students and who advocate for educational equity in schools.



2.2

An interdisciplinary approach

BOLD was not conceived to address the complexity of service learning and social action in language education only. Indeed, the BOLD consortium asserts the importance of addressing issues of linguistic inequalities and social injustice in teacher education programs of all school subjects. This is because:

✓ Inequalities are cumulative: the roots of unequal participation in the classroom, at school and in the society at large are intersectional and not related to language only or isolated from one another (Collins & Bilge, 2021; Piller, 2016);

✓ Linguistic discrimination is pervasive: school expectations about students' command of the language of schooling, based on monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1994), and misalignments in students' linguistic repertoires are transversal to all school subjects, and can contribute to systemic linguistic discrimination across the curriculum.

The 1998 Eric Digest report on the subject also informs achievements related to the participation of student teachers in service-learning programmes. Students developed skills in planning, communication with parents and representatives, improved self-esteem and self-efficacy, positive attitudes towards participation in community activities, and increased social engagement.

Early studies, like the review of the field done by Root, Callagan and Sepansky (2002) document a number of qualitative studies that have found links between service-learning and the development of competencies and dispositions necessary for effective teaching. They highlight the development of sensitivity to diversity issues and commitment to teaching. In extensive quantitative research conducted by the authors with a sample of student teachers from six service-learning programmes, they found that a significant percentage of participants report changes in their views of teaching and students as a result of the experience.

In terms of intersectionality, as put by Tavares (2025b), “elitism, linguisticism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination, unequal access, and bias are complex and operate at different levels of interaction between individuals, institutions, and cultures” (p. 8). This means that inequality, namely at school, is deeply layered and has a systemic nature. The BOLD project, mainly through the produced modules (section 3.1), addressed this issue by creating resources to prepare future educators to recognise and respond to the complexity of intersecting forms of discrimination, instead of treating them as isolated issues.

So, while language teacher education, and particularly English language teacher education, “are firmly entrenched within internationalization, linguistic imperialism, and neoliberal ideologies that frequently reproduce unequal power structures” (Warren & Ward, 2024, p.1; see also Biel & Esleben, 2025), no school subject is neutral. Whether it is maths, sciences, geography, biology, art, or physical education, the way pupils are invited (or not invited) to participate is shaped by cumulative inequalities. This is why in the BOLD project, teachers of subjects other than languages – such as Biology and Geography – were invited to participate in the project from the very beginning.

By the same token, the modules designed for curricular implementation in teacher education programs (presented in section 3.1) address a variety of teachers, as they might feel compelled to develop their knowledge about activism, citizen science, social justice, and linguistic inequalities, in order to take action. Some modules were co-created by interdisciplinary teams (for example, module “Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice”).

The BOLD approach recognises that teachers of all school subjects should be aware of how language expectations are embedded in their school subject (such as History, Geography, Biology, French and English, for example), and how they are influenced by the school and social discourses. This is important to make them stop unintentionally penalising students for how they speak or write, instead of valuing what they know or can do in their school subject.



03

The BOLD Resources

Drawing from the earlier framework, the project has developed a comprehensive set of resources to support the implementation of service-learning projects and social action in pre-service teacher education. These resources aim to foster inclusive, critical, and community-engaged pedagogies that inspire critical reflection, civic engagement, and meaningful action. They include a series of open access modules, a set of guiding principles for

service learning, and a practical toolkit designed for both student teachers and HE staff. Rooted in collaborative and transnational practices and bridging the gap between theory and educational practice, these resources are adaptable to different educational contexts and promote the integration of service learning into curricula through experiential, participatory, and socially responsive learning processes.

Each module, available in different languages and providing diversified resources (e.g. studies, videos, international reports, literature, photo/ images, paintings, journal papers, policy documents, interactive maps and documentaries), is crafted to promote active citizenship and civic engagement among student teachers addressing different concepts and topics: interculturality, multilingualism and social action; linguistic (in)equality and social and educational justice; language activism for minority and minoritised languages; linguistic and cultural management in border regions, citizen science; linguistic advocacy. Each module is briefly described below, with a focus on the key themes, concepts, objectives, and suggested methodologies.

3.1

Open access modules

The consortium produced 10 specific-themed open access modules covering service learning and social action for enhancing active commitment and activism regarding linguistic and cultural diversity in HE. The modules have been integrated into teacher education curricula in Portugal (University of Aveiro and University of Coimbra), Germany (University of Hamburg), Greece (University of Thessaly), The Netherlands (University of Groningen), and Spain (Autonomous University of Madrid).



MODULE 1



Citizen science for linguistic diversity

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module introduces the principles of citizen science as a method for engaging communities in documenting and valuing linguistic and cultural diversity and encourages critical reflection on the roles of language, power, and identity in research. It highlights how citizen science projects can empower communities, promote multilingualism, and foster inclusion. It introduces design participatory research initiatives that map and celebrate linguistic landscapes, focusing on ethical considerations, collaborative practices, and respect for community knowledge. Through case studies, learners explore successful citizen science projects focused on languages and cultures. Practical activities guide them in planning small-scale citizen science initiatives.

BUILT BY Web2Learn

[View Module](#)

MODULE 3



Maker culture and fab innovation

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module introduces the key concepts of the maker movement, including Makerspaces and Fab Labs. It highlights how these spaces can promote multilingualism and cultural diversity, emphasizing the “Do-It-Yourself” spirit as a tool for empowerment and social innovation. Learners are encouraged to design their own Makerspaces with a multilingual and multicultural focus and purposes and to document and share their practices to enhance scalability.

BUILT BY Web2Learn

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MODULE 2



Grassroots innovation for linguistic advocacy

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module explores how digital technologies and grassroots initiatives can promote linguistic diversity and inclusion. It highlights the significance of digital mobilization in enabling low-cost, open-source platforms for collective action and it underscores the importance of community empowerment, social inclusion, and the potential for institutional change through grassroots initiatives. It deepens the understanding of advocacy and its role in promoting citizen engagement, presenting strategies and techniques used in digital linguistic advocacy.

BUILT BY Web2Learn

[View Module](#)

MODULE 4



Open linguistic data, governance and data activism

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module explores how open data principles and governance frameworks can support linguistic diversity and activism. It introduces two key data governance frameworks: Openness, and the CARE principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics), emphasizing ethical data use. It underscores the importance of recognising and preserving language varieties, especially indigenous and endangered languages, highlighting their cultural and identity significance, underlining data activism as a means to advocate for linguistic diversity, showcasing initiatives like crowdsourcing, datathons, and citizen science projects that use open data to support language preservation. The module also discusses the role of digital platforms and communities in revitalizing languages through open data practices.

BUILT BY Web2Learn

[View Module](#)

MODULE 5



Crowdfunding for linguistic variety

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module explores how collective online efforts can support and enhance linguistic diversity by: looking into various crowd initiatives (such as crowdsourcing and crowd creation) that empower communities to preserve and promote their languages; providing a comprehensive guide on crowdfunding, detailing its models, objectives, and tools, and offering step-by-step instructions for launching successful campaigns in support of multilingualism; showcasing real-world examples of crowdfunding projects aimed at language revitalization, resource creation, and raising awareness. By highlighting both the challenges and opportunities inherent in crowdfunding for linguistic causes, the module equips learners with the knowledge and skills to initiate their own campaigns within participatory approaches.

BUILT BY **Web2Learn**

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MODULE 6



Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice

SHORT DESCRIPTION
The module examines how language-related inequalities intersect with broader issues of social and educational justice, exploring interconnections between linguistic equality, social justice, and educational justice and showing that linguistic inequality often intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender, race, or ability. Through real-world case studies, the module illustrates how linguistic discrimination manifests in various settings and how such inequalities can lead to social and educational injustices. Advocating for linguistically and culturally responsive pedagogies, it provides strategies for educators to implement them across curricula.

BUILT BY **University of Hamburg**

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MODULE 7



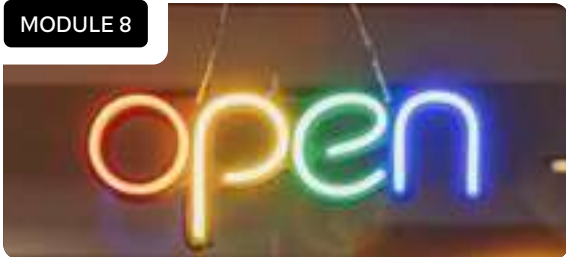
Designing social action with and for a multilingual and intercultural society

SHORT DESCRIPTION
The module explores tools and methodologies to develop responsive activism interventions related to linguistic and cultural diversity, connecting interculturality and multilingualism with democratic societies. Emphasising the significance of community engagement, participatory approaches, and the co-creation of solutions that address real-world challenges, it provides practical guidelines and methodologies for designing social actions that are sensitive to intercultural and multilingual contexts. By fostering critical reflection and practical skills, the module empowers individuals to act as changemakers in their multilingual and multicultural communities.

BUILT BY **University of Madrid**

View Module

MODULE 8



Activism for minority and minoritized languages

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module explores the significance of language activism in preserving and promoting linguistic diversity, specifically minority and minoritized languages in Europe and beyond, highlighting their vulnerability to endangerment and the necessity for revitalization efforts. It presents the main frameworks protecting regional minority languages in Europe and explores real-world examples of language activism initiatives across the globe and it examines the role of education in supporting minority languages, discussing how educational frameworks and digital tools can be leveraged for language protection and promotion.

BUILT BY **University of Groningen**

View Module

MODULE 9



Using co-modal teaching and learning for social engagement and multilingual citizen science

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module offers a comprehensive approach to teaching French to adult migrants, intertwining theoretical insights with practical methodologies. It addresses the unique challenges faced by this diverse group, emphasizing the necessity for tailored educational strategies that consider learners' varied linguistic backgrounds and socio-economic contexts. It explores the specificities of adult migrant learners, highlighting the importance of understanding their distinct needs and the socio-political factors influencing their language acquisition and it provides concrete tools and methods to enhance learners' speaking, reading and writing abilities.

BUILT BY **University of Aix-Marseille**

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MODULE 10

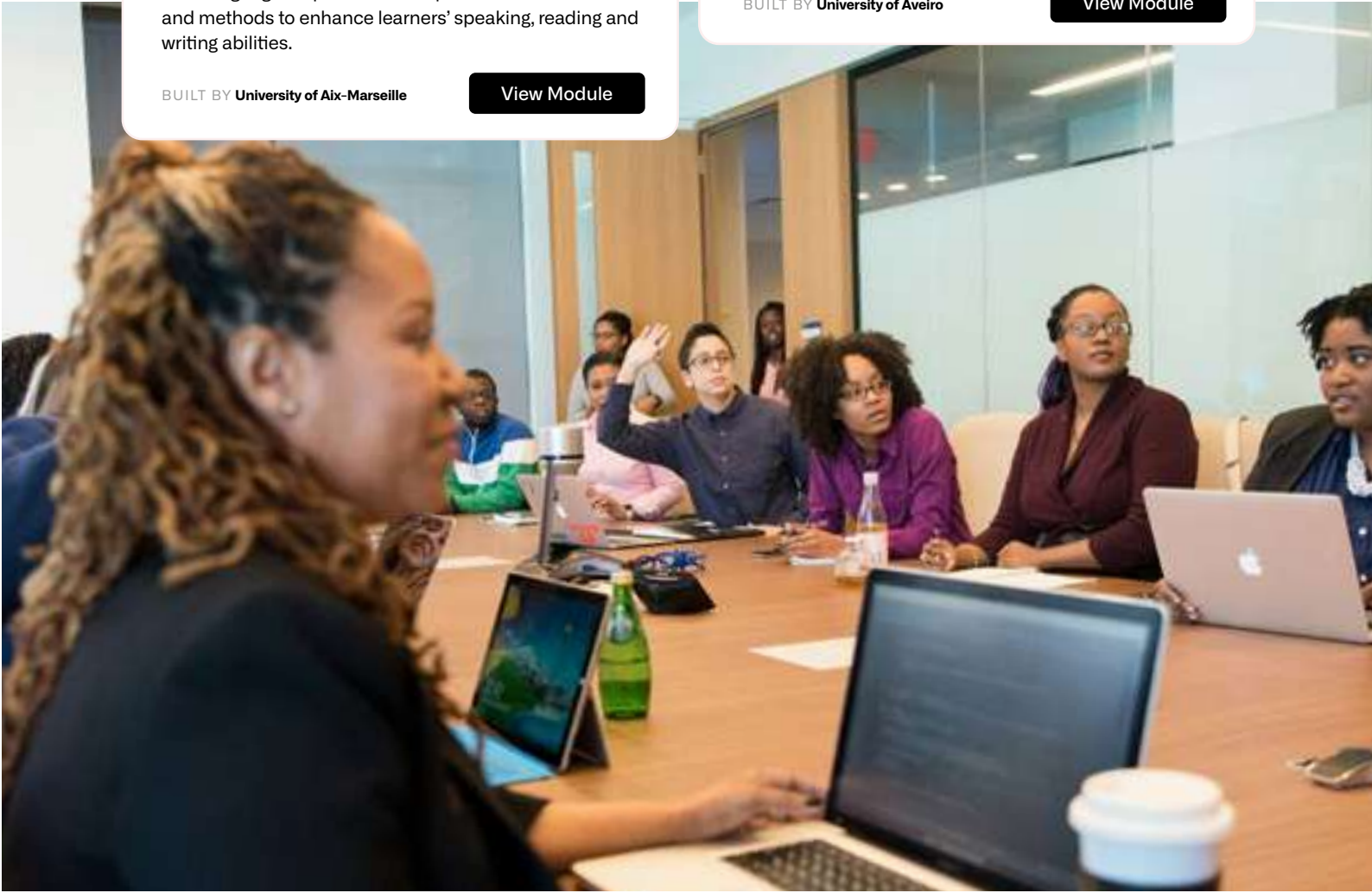


Linguistic and cultural management in border regions

SHORT DESCRIPTION
This module offers an in-depth exploration of how borders function as complex, dynamic spaces of cultural, linguistic, and human interaction and it encourages critical reflection on the multifaceted nature of borders and their impact on identity, education, and social cohesion. Through case studies and real-life examples, the module explores the daily, professional, and aesthetic experiences of border inhabitants in different places of the globe. Learners are invited to analyse examples of language education practices, supported on plurilingual and intercultural pedagogies, in border regions within a social action perspective.

BUILT BY **University of Aveiro**

View Module



Following the brief descriptions of each module, Table 1 summarises their key goals and features to provide a clearer view of their added value.

MODULE	GOAL(S)	DESCRIPTION
Citizen science for linguistic diversity	Introduce citizen science for exploring and valuing linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism, while promoting critical reflection on the relationship between language, power, and identity.	Combination of participatory research design, ethical reflection, and practical activities to support the development of inclusive, community-based citizen science initiatives.
Grassroots innovation for linguistic advocacy	Explore how grassroots initiatives and digital mobilisation can support linguistic diversity, foster community empowerment, and promote citizen engagement in advocacy for social and institutional change.	Focus on low-cost, open-source digital tools and strategies for collective linguistic advocacy, linking community-based innovation with inclusive, participatory practices.
Maker culture and fab innovation	Highlight the potential of maker culture and Fab Labs as inclusive environments for promoting multilingualism, cultural diversity, and social innovation through hands-on, Do-It-Yourself practices.	Emphasis on learner-designed Makerspaces with multilingual and multicultural purposes, fostering empowerment and scalability through documentation and sharing of practices.
Open linguistic data, governance and data activism	Examine how open data principles and ethical governance frameworks can be leveraged to advocate for linguistic diversity, preserve endangered languages, and promote data activism as a form of social engagement.	Emphasis on learner-designed Makerspaces with multilingual and multicultural purposes, fostering empowerment and scalability through documentation and sharing of practices.
Crowdfunding for linguistic variety	Present crowdfunding as a participatory strategy to support linguistic diversity, equipping learners with the knowledge and tools to design and launch campaigns that promote multilingualism and language revitalization.	Combination of theoretical insights, practical guidance, and real-world case studies to empower learners in creating impactful, community-driven crowdfunding initiatives for linguistic causes.

MODULE	GOAL(S)	DESCRIPTION
Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice	Analyse the intersections between linguistic inequality and broader social and educational injustices, promoting awareness of how language-related discrimination reinforces other forms of exclusion.	Use of real-world case studies and pedagogical strategies to support linguistically and culturally responsive teaching across educational contexts.
Designing social action with and for a multilingual and intercultural society	Support the design of socially responsive actions that promote linguistic and cultural diversity through participatory, community-driven approaches in multilingual and intercultural settings.	Integration of critical reflection, practical guidelines, and co-creative methodologies that empower individuals to design and implement social actions in linguistically and culturally diverse communities.
Activism for minority and minoritised languages	Investigate the role of activism in preserving and revitalising minority and minoritised languages, with a focus on educational strategies, policy frameworks, and community engagement.	Emphasis on international case studies, protective frameworks, and digital tools that support language activism and promote linguistic diversity in educational formal and informal settings.
Using co-modal teaching and learning for social engagement and multilingual citizen science	Address the linguistic and socio-political challenges of teaching French to adult migrants by promoting tailored, context-sensitive educational strategies that support language acquisition and social inclusion.	Focus on co-modal teaching methods, combining theoretical grounding with practical tools to enhance adult learners' speaking, reading, and writing skills in diverse contexts.
Linguistic and cultural management in border regions	Reflect critically on the social, cultural, and linguistic dynamics of border regions, examining their influence on identity, education, and social cohesion through the lens of plurilingual and intercultural pedagogies.	Use of global case studies and real-life experiences to explore educational practices and social actions rooted in the lived realities of border communities.

Table 1 - Summary of the BOLD modules.

3.2

Principles for service learning towards linguistic and cultural diversity in HE

While the previous section focused on concrete curricular modules developed by the consortium, the project also aimed to define broader guiding principles for service-learning and social action initiatives that engage with linguistic and cultural diversity in HE. To inform this process and better understand how such initiatives were being developed across the consortium countries, the project conducted an exploratory study. This included mapping social actions that address linguistic and cultural diversity in the countries of the project partners, as well as organising eight round tables (Gerritsen et al., 2023) with representatives from these initiatives, alongside students and teacher educators. Based on the insights gathered, the BOLD team developed a set of principles for service learning (Aramburuzabala et al., 2023) in HE intended to foster more reciprocal, ethical, reflexive and participatory practices of engagement with communities.

Hence, these principles are the result of a collaborative and dialogic process as the reflections and insights generated in the round tables directly informed the articulation of the principles outlined. Those reflections and insights facilitated a deeper understanding of both the benefits and challenges of institutionalising service learning as a means to foster linguistic and cultural diversity and civic engagement. Moreover they allowed exchanging best practices, identifying collaboration needs, and reflecting critically on the strengths and limitations of current and potential partnerships between communities and HEIs.

The interconnected core principles put forward, presented below (Figure 2), should guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of service-learning projects in HE.

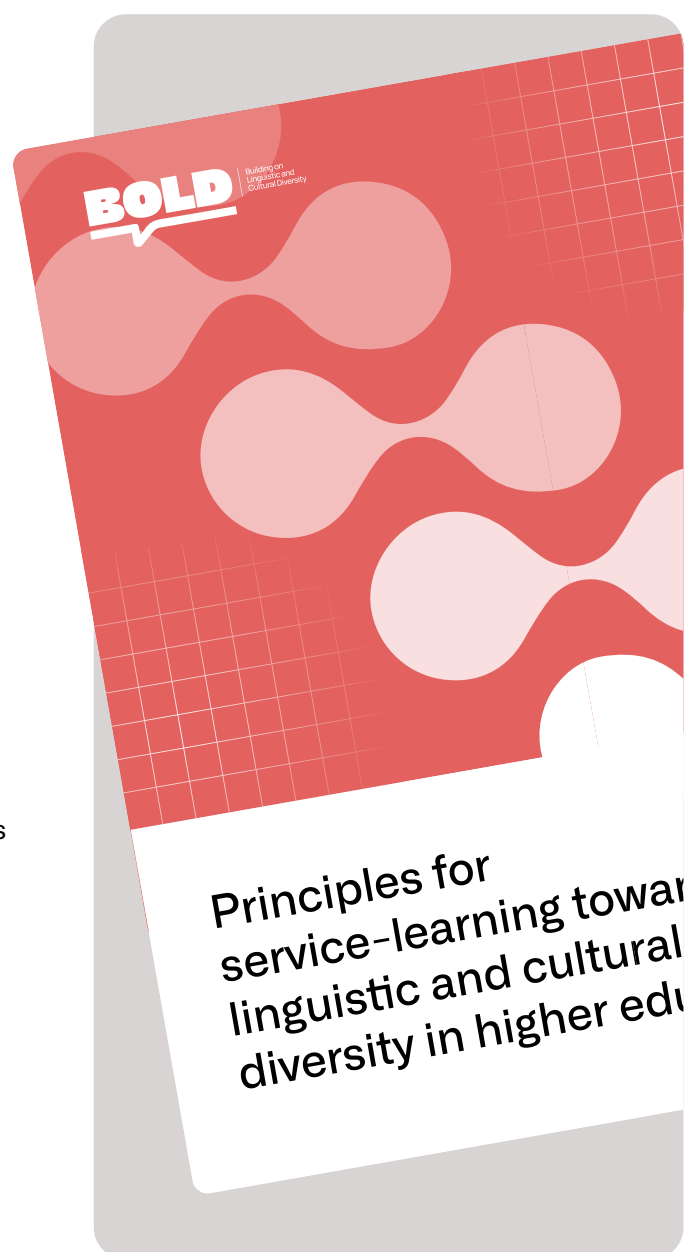


Figure 2. Principles for the design, implementation and evaluation of service-learning projects in HE.

Overall, these principles put the emphasis on the need for service learning in HE to respond to the real and concrete needs of communities in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity. In this sense, social action and service-learning projects must be co-constructed in genuine partnership with communities, ensuring reciprocity and mutual benefit. Clearly defined goals should align both academic and community objectives, integrating service-learning activities into the curriculum to strengthen the academic relevance of students' experiences.

A key feature of effective social action and service learning is the active involvement of students in all phases of the project, from planning to implementation and evaluation. Learning occurs in real-world settings where students engage in civic action and apply their knowledge in complex, authentic contexts and within this systematic reflection is crucial to support the development of critical thinking and learning consolidation in relation to social action and civic responsibility. Service learning therefore becomes a positive

variation and development of "learning" as it traditionally occurs in HE. In BOLD, students become holistic contributors to knowledge creation and civic participation. Service learning and social action therefore see "students as partners"³ (Healey, Flint & Harrington, 2016), emphasising an active, collaborative, and more equalizing epistemic position of students in HE.

Moreover, this set of principles also underline that for social action and service learning to be impactful and sustainable, they must be supported by adequate timeframes, structured support systems, and ongoing evaluation and documentation (for documentation, see template 3 in the Annexes). The process should foster transdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring that diverse forms of knowledge contribute to the initiative.

Ultimately, these principles aim to support transformative learning experiences, based on civic engagement, promoting social justice, intercultural understanding, and long-term partnerships between HE institutions and communities.

³ See also: <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/resources/students-as-partners/> and <https://www.teaching.unsw.edu.au/about-teaching/students-as-partners>.

3.3
Toolkit for HE
students and staff

Based on the previous principles for social action and service learning, a comprehensive toolkit (Ruiz Sánchez & Alcántara Plá, 2024) has been created to guide HE staff and students, particularly student teachers, in developing and implementing projects focused on social activism and systemic change. This resource provides a set of worksheets ordered chronologically, following the usual steps of a project of social action, that support projects' effective planning, implementation and evaluation. Ten design phases are put forward (Figure 3).



**Evaluate,
Monitor,
Document.**

1

Feel & Empathize

2

Imagine & define

3

Visualize

4

Prototype (multilaterally)

5

Act

6

Evaluate

7

Celebrate!

8

Measure & Share

9

Re-evaluate



Figure 3. BOLD project design phases.

FOR EACH PHASE OF PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION, A WORKSHEET IS PROVIDED.

WORKSHEET 01

The first worksheet provides a comprehensive checklist to guide educators through the preparation, implementation, and review stages of a service-learning project. It emphasises early planning, collaboration with community partners, integration into the academic syllabus, ongoing reflection, and final evaluations with all stakeholders involved. It serves as a roadmap for ensuring that both educational and community objectives are met throughout the project.

WORKSHEET 02

The second worksheet invites teams to begin their projects by “feeling and empathising” with the community and individuals affected by the issue they aim to address. This phase is rooted in emotional awareness and contextual understanding, encouraging participants to engage deeply with the people, cultures, and environments involved. It offers guiding questions to explore the needs, motivations, and challenges of those affected, and considers the intercultural dimensions of the situation.

WORKSHEET 03

In the third worksheet, participants are asked to imagine, define, and visualise transformative solutions to the issues they have identified. Using tools like the Moonshot methodology, the project team is encouraged to think boldly and systemically, beyond short-term interventions.

WORKSHEET 04

The fourth worksheet centers on prototyping the envisioned solution through a multilateral process. It encourages teams to map out their goals across different timeframes and to break down the main objective into smaller, achievable steps. This stage also requires the identification of required human and material resources, and the establishment of indicators for success that reflect both social impact and intercultural sensitivity.

WORKSHEET 05

Worksheet five focuses on the action phase. Teams implement their planned activities and begin detailed documentation of the process. This documentation, whether written, photographic, or audiovisual, is crucial for transparency, reflection, and eventual sharing. It allows for better evaluation and facilitates replication or scaling of the project in other contexts. Documentation from both individual participants and the project team is emphasised.

WORKSHEET 06

Evaluation is at the core of the sixth worksheet, which proposes a holistic and participatory approach. Teams are encouraged to assess not only the outcomes and learning but also the emotional experiences and interpersonal dynamics that arose during the project. This includes evaluating cultural and linguistic impacts and applying restorative practices where conflicts or harm have occurred. All actors are part of this evaluation.

WORKSHEET 07

The seventh worksheet promotes sharing and transferring the results and learnings of the project. It outlines several strategies for disseminating the project (academic publications, conferences, social media, or local community events, ...) ensuring that outcomes are accessible in multiple languages and that open licenses are used to foster reuse and adaptation by others.

WORKSHEET 08

The eighth worksheet provides a framework for measuring the social impact of the project. It stresses the importance of defining indicators from the outset and suggests ways to quantify progress, outcomes, and the effectiveness of strategies used. It highlights the challenge of measuring cultural and linguistic dimensions but insists on their inclusion in any serious evaluation effort.

WORKSHEET 09

To support project planning, the ninth worksheet offers a detailed template for designing a service-learning initiative. It covers technical details and context to objectives, activities, partnerships, reflections, and resources. It also prompts teams to consider alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, gender inclusion, and intercultural integration.

WORKSHEET 10

Finally, the tenth worksheet presents a service-learning agreement form to be signed by all involved parties. It outlines the specific service activities, learning objectives, and the intended outcomes related to multilingualism and interculturality. It reinforces mutual accountability and clarity of roles in the educational and social dimensions of the project.

Together, these ten worksheets form a cohesive and practical framework that empowers HE institutions to embed social action within academic curricula in a meaningful and sustainable way. By combining rigorous planning, empathic engagement, and critical reflection, the toolkit facilitates effective service-learning projects, equipping students and staff with the tools to become active citizens and educators capable of initiating systemic change in their communities and beyond.

04

Practices of service learning and social action implementation: selected examples

Embedding service learning and social action into teacher education curricula requires flexible and context-sensitive tools that can adapt to the specificities of each educational environment. Considering that, three types of templates were developed to address this need: one focused on the integration of the BOLD modules into existing curricula (Annex I), directed to teachers; another dedicated to the design and implementation of student-led social action projects (Appendix II), both for students and teachers; and a third aimed at monitoring these implementations, only for students (Appendix III).

These templates were designed to provide a clear structure and to act as guides that help teachers and students to plan, implement and reflect on the modules' curricular introduction and on the social action projects development. However, the templates remain flexible enough to be adapted to diverse educational and curricular contexts, which allows HE institutions to tailor the resources

to their pedagogical methods and goals, curricular constraints, and experiences of collaboration with communities. Their purpose was to foster reflection, ensure pedagogical coherence, and facilitate documentation of key aspects of implementation. They also served as instruments for internal monitoring and exchange of practices between partners.

This section presents concrete examples of how the templates I and II were used by the BOLD consortium in different countries and institutional settings. Each example reflects the diversity of curricular frameworks and working methodologies across the partner institutions, while highlighting shared commitments to civic engagement, linguistic and cultural diversity, and justice-oriented teaching (education) practices. By sharing these experiences, we aim to illustrate the versatility of the templates and to offer inspiration for future implementations in initial teacher education programs.



4.1

Modules' curricular integration

4.1.1

Selected examples

EXAMPLE 01

Linguistic equality and inclusive practices in Geography education

UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG
BACHELOR EDUCATION – INTRODUCTION TO GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION

Linguistic equality as a basis
for social and educational justice

Summary

The module “Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice” was fully integrated into the course unit of “Introduction to Geography Education”, from the Bachelor programme in Education of University of Hamburg. Addressing future geography teachers, the module was used to explore the relationship between spatiality and linguistic diversity, with a particular focus on educational and social justice. The implementation involved approximately 40 student teachers and unfolded over the entire summer semester of 2024, combining theoretical sessions on key concepts with practical group activities. These included the use of interactive maps and digital tools, debates on how language-related issues intersect with geographical education, and brainstorming exercises on inclusive teaching practices. The integration of the module aimed at fostering teacher agency and at raising awareness about linguistic bias and stigmatization from an early stage in teacher education.

Perceived Impact

The activities carried out throughout the module implementation encouraged critical engagement with issues of linguistic inequality within the field of geography education. Group discussions, brainstorming sessions and practical tasks using digital tools allowed students to explore how linguistic and spatial dimensions intersect in educational contexts. Preliminary impressions suggest that the module contributed to students' awareness of inclusive practices and the role of language in fostering spatial and social justice.

EXAMPLE 02

Breaking down linguistic and cultural barriers in language classes

UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO
MASTER'S DEGREE IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND
MASTER'S DEGREE IN TEACHING OF PORTUGUESE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE –
DIDACTICS AND CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Linguistic and cultural
management in border regions

Summary

The sub-unit “Language education – combining instrumental goals and broader educational aims”, from the module “Linguistic and cultural management in border regions”, was implemented in the second semester of 2023/2024 within the Master’s programmes in Teaching of Portuguese or English and Foreign Languages at the University of Aveiro. The session took place during the course unit Didactics and Curricular Development in Foreign Languages and involved 28 student teachers. Grounded in a project-based learning approach, the implementation focused on exploring key Council of Europe resources on plurilingual and intercultural education. Students worked collaboratively to analyse these materials and created posters (in which some included audio elements) for an exhibition titled “Plurilingual and intercultural education: why?”. The exhibition was presented publicly in the entrance hall of the Department and discussed with an audience of teacher educators and researchers.

Perceived Impact

The activity fostered meaningful engagement among students, who reported a deeper and more critical understanding of plurilingual and intercultural education. The opportunity to recontextualise institutional resources into multimodal public-facing outputs was perceived by the teaching team as particularly effective in motivating in-depth analysis and reflection. Feedback from students, gathered through individual portfolios, highlighted an enhanced awareness of concepts such as linguistic rights, the distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism, and the communicative dimension of inclusive teaching. The interaction with external visitors during the exhibition was seen as enriching, reinforcing the importance of empathy, respect, and openness in language education. Overall, the implementation contributed to students’ professional development by encouraging them to reflect on their role as facilitators of inclusive and culturally responsive classroom environments.

EXAMPLE 03

Promoting linguistic justice through international collaboration

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN
EDUCATIONAL MASTER (TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME) - ENLIGHT
INTERNATIONAL TEACHER MODULE: TEACHING FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN
EUROPEAN CLASSROOMS - A CHALLENGE-BASED APPROACH.

Linguistic equality as a basis for
social and educational justice.

Activism for minorities and
minoritised languages.

Summary

At the University of Groningen, the BOLD modules “Linguistic equality as a basis for social and educational justice” and “Activism for minorities and minoritised languages” were concomitantly implemented during a one-week intensive programme embedded within the broader course unit “Enlight international Teacher Module: Teaching for Global Citizenship in European Classrooms - A Challenge-Based Approach”. The implementation involved 45 Educational Master’s students and combined online learning with a live workshop on global citizenship. Students engaged in interactive tasks, explored case studies on linguistic activism, and delivered final pitch presentations. The activities encouraged collaborative knowledge-building and critical reflection on linguistic inequalities in educational systems.

Perceived Impact

Students reported increased awareness of linguistic prejudice and felt more empowered to act for equity in their future classrooms. Several participants translated the knowledge into direct social action, including writing multilingual advisory letters to European Ministries of Education and exploring local cases of language-based activism. Teachers noted a striking shift in students’ attitudes towards speakers of minoritised languages and a clear readiness to adopt inclusive teaching strategies. The module’s accessibility and relevance were praised, though feedback highlighted the need to adjust workload expectations and consider group-based approaches to deepen peer collaboration and sustained engagement.

EXAMPLE 04

Exploring linguistic inequality through intercultural communication

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
BACHELOR STUDY PROGRAMME
ENGLISH FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Linguistic equality as a basis for
social and educational justice

Summary

This module was implemented over two sessions (six hours total) within the course English for Intercultural Communication, aiming to foster students' awareness of linguistic inequality and its links to social and educational justice. The pedagogical approach combined video-based discussions, reflective activities, and multimodal resources to explore key topics such as native-speakerism, accentism, and the monolingual mindset. These concepts were introduced through theoretical input and interactive exercises, encouraging students to examine them critically within the broader field of language education.

Perceived Impact

The module was well received by students, who engaged actively with its socio-political focus and appreciated the relevance of the themes to their own lives. The accessible and participatory format helped facilitate meaningful reflection, even around complex or unfamiliar ideas. Students contributed personal experiences that deepened the collective understanding of linguistic inequality, including one account of Breton language suppression in France, and another reflecting on bilingualism in a Greek-American family. Although time constraints limited more extensive project-based activities, the module successfully supported the development of intercultural awareness and critical perspectives on linguistic justice in education.

The examples of module integration presented before reflect how BOLD partner institutions have embedded content related to linguistic and cultural diversity into teacher education curricula. Although not structured as service-learning experiences per se, these implementations reveal a shared commitment to promoting inclusive, plurilingual, reflective, socially responsive, and pedagogically innovative teaching practices. The modules served

for student teachers to examine educational inequality, dominant language ideologies, interculturality, and the social construction of linguistic differences within their disciplines. These examples also show the potential of curricular modules to raise awareness and equip future teachers with tools to address diversity in their future classrooms. The next subsection provides evidence from these accomplishments.

4.1.2

Curricular implementation: Voices from the field

As the examples in the previous section demonstrate, in the academic years 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 several course units of Bachelor's and Master's Programmes for Teaching in the several countries of the consortium have incorporated the modules into their syllabi. An analysis of this integration has revealed that it served several purposes:

✓ Enhancing student teachers' understanding of and reflection on concepts such as linguistic equality, social, educational and cognitive justice, intercultural citizenship education, service learning and social action, and language activism:

"At the beginning of the semester and considering the course unit aims, it is important to provide an overview regarding the state of the art in Foreign Language Didactics, enhancing the perspective of a plurilingual and intercultural approach in an active teaching methodology."

✓ Supporting the conceptualisation and implementation of social action and service-learning projects addressing issues of linguistic and cultural diversity:

"The project process has been challenging due to the lack of previous expertise with the ApS and Moonshot methodology. However, as the project developed, we felt how both the institution and the assigned professors were there to support us, they always let the students make the final decisions since it was part of the learning process: to be able to cooperate with each other and reach a consensus towards completing the task."

✓ Enhancing student teachers' understanding of the added-value of implementing culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies:

"English Didactics aims to promote critical reflection on current objectives, methods and approaches in English language teaching and learning ... and develop skills in lesson planning and pedagogical resource creation. I aim to prepare student teachers' to deal with the current "superdiversity" present in Portuguese classrooms through pedagogies that support equity and inclusion. Module 6 combines a theoretical foundation with practical classroom examples to inspire student teachers to promote linguistic and social justice in class."

✓ Facilitating the examination and analysis of classroom situations and language education practices in diversified contexts within a social action perspective:

"The integration of this module in this course unit allowed students to approach linguistic and cultural diversity in border regions within a social action perspective. This helped students to - recognise, and problematise linguistic and cultural diversity in society in general and in educational communities in particular; - problematise issues, experiences and situations of linguistic and cultural diversity in diversified geographical and socio-political contexts."

Overall, the curricular integration of modules opened up opportunities to reduce the gap between theory and educational practices, encouraging the development of a wide range of activities, namely role-playing, simulations, presentations, brainstorming, debates, analysis of case studies, concept mapping, and exhibitions. Student teachers agreed that the multimodal resources in the modules fostered a more critical approach to linguistic and cultural diversity:

"The module challenged me to think deeply about systemic issues related to linguistic inequality and privilege in the world around me, and provided an opportunity to reflect on my own linguistic practices or biases. I don't think I ever thought all that seriously about how linguistic injustice might be linked to other social issues"

They also acknowledged that the resources enhanced the development of pedagogical competencies necessary to effectively address linguistic and cultural diversity in their teaching practices:

"As a future teacher of Portuguese and History, I carry with me a commitment to promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, deeply aware of the importance of recognising the different backgrounds, histories, and traditions of each student. I understand that this appreciation for everyone's roots can be transformative in the educational environment, as celebrating multiple identities and forms of expression helps create a truly inclusive and enriching learning space."

Moreover, integrating the modules in the curricula sparked students' interest in developing service-learning projects aimed at promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the future:

"Reflecting on my role as a future teacher goes beyond classroom management skills, following plans or curricula, or performing linguistic tutoring duties. I believe my role leans increasingly toward mediation. A position that fosters a positive unease in questioning dogmas, deconstructing preconceived mental frameworks. The teacher is one of the last bastions of plurality, an agent who must actively strive for linguistic equity and the pinnacle of social and educational justice."



4.2

Examples of projects for social action and service learning

EXAMPLE 01

Promoting the participation of heritage language speakers in the foreign language classroom

UNIVERSITY OF HAMBURG
MASTER OF EDUCATION: TEACHING DEGREE
FOR SECONDARY LEVEL I AND II – "BEGLEITSEMINAR KPI"

Stadtteilschule Niendorf,
Hamburg (French class, grade 8)

Summary

This project was carried out by two student teachers from the Master of Education programme at Universität Hamburg, as part of the seminar Begleitseminar KPI, which accompanied their teaching internship. Conducted in collaboration with a local school (Stadtteilschule Niendorf), the project investigated how non-heritage language learners in an 8th grade French class perceived their classmates who had French as a heritage language. Through qualitative interviews, the project explored whether these perceptions affected classroom dynamics, student motivation, or feelings of fairness, particularly in relation to oral assessments. Findings revealed that while some non-heritage students viewed heritage peers as enjoying certain advantages, they also saw them as sources of motivation. Overall, no strong negative effects were found. The project highlights the importance of acknowledging student perspectives when addressing linguistic diversity and inclusion in language education.

EXAMPLE 02

Enhancing inclusion and intercultural understanding through non-verbal communication in teaching Biology and Geology

UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO
MASTER'S IN TEACHING BIOLOGY AND GEOLOGY
IN THE 3RD CYCLE OF BASIC EDUCATION AND IN SECONDARY EDUCATION –
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS I

José Estêvão Secondary School
(several classes)

Summary

Developed by five student teachers from the University of Aveiro, this project was carried out within the course unit Special Educational Needs I, part of the master's programmes in teaching Biology and Geology. Conducted in partnership with José Estêvão secondary school, the initiative (titled “Beyond Words: Interculturality Makes Its Mark”) sought to promote inclusion and intercultural understanding through non-verbal communication. The project consisted of interactive sessions with approximately 100 pupils, centered around a card game specifically designed to foster empathy and intercultural exchange without relying on spoken language. Activities included the creation of materials, calendarization with schools and teachers, organisation of the game sessions, and reflection groups with students. The project concluded with dissemination efforts involving a final report and a scientific poster, contributing to both academic reflection and community awareness on inclusive and intercultural educational practices.

EXAMPLE 03

Fostering accessibility and inclusion in the healthcare sector for the D/deaf community

WEB2LEARN AND ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME OF THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE – SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Association of Deaf
of Northern Greece

Summary

This social action project was co-designed by Web2Learn in collaboration with the School of English Language and Literature at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Association of Deaf of Northern Greece. Aiming to foster accessibility and inclusion of Deaf citizens in the healthcare sector, the project brought together D/deaf, hard of hearing citizens and hearing students to co-create short audiovisual materials that raise awareness of the communication barriers faced by the D/deaf community in hospitals. The 3 mixed groups (hearing students and Deaf citizens) engaged in joint scripting, filming and subtitling a short video (~2 minutes) focused on equitable healthcare access. Through collaborative creative processes and structured phases, including meetings, group work, and public presentation of the videos, the project promoted mutual understanding, advocacy, and active citizenship across linguistic and sensory boundaries.
Link: <https://web2learn.eu/bold-project/bold-thessaloniki/>

EXAMPLE 04

Empowering refugee and migrant students through joint comics' creation with university students

WEB2LEARN AND NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
FACULTY OF TURKISH AND MODERN ASIAN STUDIES

4th Sivitanidios VET School and
Athens Comics Library

Summary

By initiative of Web2Learn, in collaboration with the Faculty of Turkish and Modern Asian Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, this project involved university students who collaborated with VET students of refugee and/or migrant background to create comics exploring social themes, such as multilingualism, identity, and intercultural understanding. Implemented within the course unit “Multilingualism and Interculturality through Comics”, this social action combined joint work by mixed groups of students who used creative expression and community engagement to produce their story in the form of a comic. Facilitated by educators of the Athens Comics Library, and in collaboration with the 4th Sivitanidios VET School where the group workshops were hosted, student teams engaged in activities that included co-creation of comics, sharing of personal narratives, and collective reflection on linguistic diversity and social inclusion. The project promoted intercultural dialogue and aimed to foster empathy, social awareness, and civic responsibility through artistic collaboration.

Comic (end result): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YR6sTSf4jXYAE2_umpL550aTKHLo4EEY/view

EXAMPLE 05

Identifying and reporting hate crimes through a chatbot

AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MADRID
MASTER'S DEGREE IN LANGUAGE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Summary

Developed within the master's degree in language and artificial intelligence at Autonomous University of Madrid, this project engaged 32 students in the collaborative design of “DEL.IA”, a multilingual chatbot aimed at supporting the identification and reporting of hate crimes under Spanish law. Implemented through the course units “Development of projects” and “Master's thesis”, the initiative integrated language technologies with legal frameworks, ethical AI, and inclusive communication in Spanish, French, and English. Students worked in functional teams across work packages (legal research, development, communication) and conducted interviews with NGO leaders, police, lawyers, and hate crime specialists. Activities included simulations, concept mapping, analysis of case studies, and peer-led coordination. The result was a socially engaged, AI-powered tool that bridges computational linguistics and civic responsibility, promoting legal literacy and addressing real-world issues through language-based technological solutions.

EXAMPLE 06

Fostering intercultural communication through role-play in reception classes

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

TEACHER TRAINING MASTER STUDIES - RESEARCHING LEARNING

ISK, Estdal College, Groningen
(reception class)

Summary

Developed as part of the “Researching Learning” course within the Master’s in Teacher Education at the University of Groningen, this project focused on enhancing global citizenship and intercultural communication skills among newly arrived pupils in reception classes. A group of five student teachers redesigned a role-play card game, originally conceived for B1/B2 English learners, for A1/A2 learners of Dutch as a second language. Implemented at Estdal College’s reception class (ISK), the game used realistic scenarios (e.g. multicultural cafeteria planning) and secret roles shaped by contrasting communication styles and belief systems. Pupils engaged in discussions using linguistic scaffolds to practice oral Dutch while exploring collaborative problem-solving. The project included literature review, game adaptation, classroom implementation, observation and interviews, culminating in reflective discussions on communication challenges and inclusive pedagogies. Results were presented within the course for peer and faculty feedback.

EXAMPLE 07

Empowering male juveniles held at a correctional institution through artistic and plurilingual pedagogies

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY

BACHELOR STUDY PROGRAMME - ENGLISH FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Juvenile Correctional Institution
for Males of the city of Volos

Summary

The DINAMI project, coordinated by the University of Thessaly, brought together university students and male juveniles held at the Juvenile Correctional Institution of Volos through a semester-long series of weekly workshops. Drawing from artistic and plurilingual pedagogies, including music, theatre-in-education, play-based learning and translanguaging, students co-designed and facilitated activities aimed at building trust, expressing identities, fostering team spirit, encouraging creative expression, and developing intercultural awareness. Project phases included icebreaking games, co-creation of a plurilingual team identity collage, songwriting and recording, autobiographical storytelling, and intercultural board games. Participants came from diverse backgrounds (including Roma, Albanian and Pakistani), and the initiative succeeded in creating a shared space of emotional connection, critical reflection, and empowerment. Implemented through a service-learning and action-research framework, DINAMI exemplified socially engaged teacher education grounded in mutual learning and civic responsibility. Link: <https://web2learn.eu/bold-project/bold-thessaloniki/>

The projects showcased here highlight the capacity of social action to connect teacher education with broader societal challenges. Each project emerged from a specific institutional and community context: a language education practicum in a secondary school in Hamburg, a science teacher education course working with pupils in Aveiro, a cross-sector collaboration involving university students and libraries, members of the D/deaf community, or young inmates in prisons (all the last three in Greece), or a student-led initiative with refugee teenagers in Groningen. These projects addressed diverse social concerns, including:

- ✓ Linguistic discrimination and the development of intercultural communication,
- ✓ Equitable access to healthcare,
- ✓ Students’ perceptions of fairness in assessment at school,
- ✓ The role of non-verbal communication in inclusive education,
- ✓ The visibility of marginalised (linguistic) identities in public discourses and institutions,
- ✓ Educational inclusion and empowerment of refugee youth through creative engagement.

Beyond the diversity of formats and target groups, what unites these initiatives is their shared commitment to fostering inclusion, advancing social justice, nurturing linguistic and cultural awareness, and creating meaningful connections between academic learning and real-world challenges.

Despite differences in target audiences and the need to rescale the different phases of the projects (because of structural constraints in some cases, see section 5.1), these cases provide inspiration for other institutions wishing to support student-led social impact through service learning and social action.



05

Lessons learnt: **Implementation of social action and service learning in teacher education programs**

The integration of social action and service learning into teacher education programs reflects a growing recognition of the need to prepare future educators not only as subject specialists, but as agents of equity and community engagement (at the micro, meso and macro levels, as shown in section 2.1). BOLD sustains that, as schools face increasingly diverse classrooms and deepening social inequalities, teacher education should evolve to equip pre-service teachers with the tools to teach responsively, critically, and justly. However, implementing service learning and social action in meaningful, transformative ways presents complex challenges, as the BOLD consortium was able to experience first hand. Such challenges can range from institutional constraints and fragmented curricula to the difficulty of sustaining long-term community partnerships. In the sections that follow, we delve into the main challenges the BOLD consortium faced in some project implementation processes and the ways forward we can conceive, based on critical observations of structural ecologies in presence.

5.1

Challenges

One of the lessons learned during the development and implementation of the BOLD social action and service-learning activities is that they might be difficult to adapt to time constraints and the traditional academic cultures based on disciplinary divide and modulation of contents (organised in semesters). So, one of the first difficulties, in some of the contexts (like the German one), was to scale down some of the principles included in the BOLD toolkit, in order to make projects feasible for one semester. In many cases therefore it was not possible to go beyond the diagnosis of the

problems and issues at the micro or meso level (see section 1). Even if pre-service teachers managed to critically diagnose instances of social injustice and inequality of participation in the classroom and at the school level, collaboratively discussing possible solutions to the problems, they were not always able to implement projects to tackle solutions and analyse potential developments. This means that, structurally, teacher education programs are predominantly designed to foster student teachers' reflexivity and research capabilities, but less able to enhance their abilities to act upon the contexts they will be working in.

Embedding service learning and social action at the macro level involves building positive university-school-community relationships and collaborating with families, NGOs, and other external stakeholders. This seemed difficult to implement in some contexts for several interrelated reasons. First, most teacher education programs are overloaded with content (pedagogy, subject knowledge, assessments, placements, etc.) and the curricular integration of service learning and social action demands structural coordination among actors and structures. A way to counter this position would be to “use service-learning experiences as a method to teach current course content” (Erickson & Anderson, 2023, p. 6), therefore enhancing the connections between theory and practice even during a short period of time. Second, not all teacher education programs have long-term and well-established relationships with local communities or NGOs.

This explains why some partner institutions had difficulties finding partners outside the more mainstream university-school collaborations. Erickson and Anderson (2023) also acknowledge this difficulty: “high-quality service-learning projects take time to plan and carry out, and relationships among teachers, students, and community

members take time to blossom.” (p. 8). Third, results of projects' implementation showed that pre-service teachers are still developing their basic teaching skills and are substantially content-oriented. This is why, as we saw in section 1, many pre-service teachers focused on issues of inequality related to specific subject and pedagogical content and classroom management, at the micro level. Adding community collaboration at this stage seems to be felt as a burden and even overwhelming. Indeed, unlike classroom-based (micro) or school-level (meso) work, macro-level service learning may be perceived by pre-service teachers as non-essential or peripheral to their professional development.

This perception can be promoted by discourses or models of teacher competences, usually built around a tripartite model of mastery of specific subject-content, specific pedagogical knowledge and skills and affective dispositions, including the own attitudes towards the subject (Baumert & Kunter, 2013). Nevertheless, some of the testimonials reproduced in section 4 show that participants might be able to envision a socially engaged professional self, if given the opportunity to engage with appropriate content and task design.



5.2

Ways forward

Matching the lessons learnt with possible ways forward, Table 2 offers a glimpse of structural changes that can be useful to facilitate the

curricular integration of service learning and social action in teacher education programs. Identifying challenges and envisioning ways forward can enhance the transferability of the projects presented in this handbook and inspire readers to adapt them to their own contexts.

Table 2 - Challenges and ways forward.

CHALLENGES	WHY IS IT AN ISSUE?	WAYS FORWARD
Disciplinary-divide in teacher education programs	Social problems are complex and intersectional, requiring, in many cases, trans- and interdisciplinary approaches. Universities tend to offer reduced opportunities for interdisciplinary learning.	Build work teams of student teachers of different programs, combining disciplinary expertises.
Organisation of teacher education programs in semesters (with lack of continuity)	Social action and service learning are not one-off events; as processes based on building relationships and understanding community contexts, semester-based courses (typically 10–15 weeks) often do not allow enough time for students to find partners and co-create and follow through on meaningful service initiatives.	Even if abandoning semester-based organisation (which is often unavoidable due to institutional structures) might be infeasible, it is possible to rethink how continuity, coherence, and community engagement can be embedded within it. This might be thought of in terms of design and implementation of projects across semesters and across course units, with an interdisciplinary approach. When referring to this issue, Erikson and Anderson (2023), suggest: “integrate service-learning throughout a variety of courses in the teacher preparation program” (p. 8).

CHALLENGES	WHY IS IT AN ISSUE?	WAYS FORWARD
Separation of university content into juxtaposed units	Some teacher education programs promote juxtaposition of subjects and units, usually related to subject transmission, leading pre-service teachers to lose sight of what connects social justice, community engagement, curriculum design, pedagogical practice and the selection of contents they are called to teach in their disciplinary fields.	Programs favour the preparation of pre-service teachers who know the “what” of teaching (subject-knowledge) but not the “why” or “how to do it equitably” (lack of focus on responsive pedagogies). Programs could thus be built through cross-units and interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring connections with fieldwork (not only at the micro level). Possible methodologies to do so could include project-based learning, case studies and community inquiries.
Reduced perspective of what makes the teacher professional competence	During implementation of projects, student teachers sometimes emulated the idea that teacher’s professional competences should focus on technical skills such as classroom (interaction) management, subject delivery (such as grammar and vocabulary teaching) and standardised assessment (how to grade students).	Teacher education programs should require pre-service teachers to be critical thinkers, reflective practitioners, and community-engaged professionals. These programs could more strongly prepare teachers not just to teach (a specific school subject), but to engage with real-world inequalities and act upon them.

To wrap up, we could say that the most mainstream semester-based, modular structure in teacher education programs seems to prioritise administrative convenience above social commitment. As social action and service learning are based on continuity, commitment, and complexity (section 1 of this document), these qualities are inhibited by modular systems with lack of permeability. To prepare student teachers for transformative work and action, teacher education programs need to reimagine time, structure, and relationship-building in their design, in “pedagogies of the possible” (Hélot & Ó Laoire, 2011). Bringing the concept of “pedagogies of the possible” to the forefront underscores the fact that, even when challenges seem overwhelming, small steps can still be possible. Indeed, as the contributors to this book show, it is important to respect the ecology for which projects are designed and the contexts where they are thought for. These two ecologies might be difficult to conciliate. Nevertheless, small

steps can be done at the university by finding cracks in the structures and by imagining paths to integrating service learning and social action in existing seminars and classes. Even if that means downscaling the projects to fit the structures where they are implemented, the efforts might lead to a future mainstreaming of service learning and social action in teacher education programs.

Identifying challenges and ways forward, as we did in this section, helps to reveal context-specific issues (such as structural gaps, curricular misalignments, or resistance to change) that might limit the replication of the project in new HE and teacher education settings. BOLD therefore recognises the need to locally adapt the project resources (based on the challenges encountered during project design and implementation) and to develop frameworks that are both transferable and flexible.

06

Conclusion

Conclusion

The BOLD approach to service learning and social action, following Warren and Ward (2024), was not one that is of “resistance to” but of “answer to”, being informed by a transformative mindset. According to the same authors, “while the understanding of activism as “resistance to” has allowed scholarship to trace one impetus for teachers’ activism, this perspective risks framing activism as primarily reactive. Such an orientation may inadvertently underemphasise the future-oriented, imaginative, and justice-oriented aspects of activism that seeks to proactively improve conditions for multilingual learners” (p. 7).

This approach, we claim, focuses on what we are building, not just what we are fighting. In engaging in these transformative perspectives, the BOLD approach becomes a space to imagine and enact new possibilities in education, not just critique existing systems, which might be very nihilist in nature. By embracing “change”, the BOLD perspective, despite difficulties in implementation that might arise (see section 4), is grounded in hope, vision, empowerment, and agency, centered on understanding and improving conditions, not just being vocal about and resisting harm, injustices and inequalities.

As a whole, the BOLD project:

- ✓ Positioned pre-service teachers as full partners in knowledge creation and builders of a better future, not just critics of the present;
- ✓ Envisioned pre-service teacher programs as “laboratories” of social justice: places to start experimenting and practice inclusion, to conceptualise community-driven projects, and to imagine new and responsive pedagogies for their classrooms.

If this hand-on handbook readers are interested in introducing service learning and social action in their teaching education programs, the following words by Pedler can offer some solace in face of uncertainty of achievements:

“Nothing was ever incontestably ‘successful’. We ran projects and they sometimes worked and they sometimes didn’t; or some people were successful to a degree, whilst others showed little progress. Simple cause and effect are hard to trace in the dense networks of big systems and organisations; accidental ironies and unintended consequences could be counted on and successful outcomes, insofar as we could find proof of these, were too removed to be reasonably be tracked back to their origins” (Pedler, 2020).

Pedler’s words invite us all to move, to try, to learn by doing. We hope this handbook echoes that spirit, encouraging teacher educators and student teachers to take meaningful steps towards embedding service learning and social action in their practice, and to walk together toward a more just, participatory, and hopeful education committed to social justice, active citizenship, and meaningful change.



07

Glossary

Glossary

Activism

Implies taking individual and collective actions to disrupt the status quo and enact transformative practices. Activism are all actions that work towards sustainable systems for deepening understanding, mitigating conflict and promoting peace within communities and oppressed groups. It involves a growing sense of agency and empowerment of activist members to implement their ideas.

Civic engagement

Means “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. vi). And further in the same book: “a morally and civically responsible individual recognises himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxvi).

Community-based learning

Refers to a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage, and natural environments. Community-based learning is also motivated by the belief that all communities have intrinsic educational assets and resources that educators can use to enhance learning experiences for students.

Critical citizenship

Involves not only analysing and critiquing the current state of affairs but also actively suggesting and advocating for transformative changes and enhancements. It calls for a deep commitment, conscious awareness, and collective engagement, envisioning a hopeful future rooted in the potential for meaningful change. This concept emphasises the importance of not just identifying flaws in the system but actively participating in the pursuit of positive transformations, highlighting the belief that individuals, through their collective efforts, can contribute to a better society.

Critical language awareness

Includes awareness of linguistic diversity and the ability to describe it and the recognition that “language conventions and practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes” (Hélot et al., 2018, p. 4; also Fairclough, 1992).

Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies

Refers to teaching approaches that actively recognise, respect, and incorporate students’ diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences into teaching and learning processes. These pedagogies aim to create inclusive and equitable educational spaces by adapting curricula, teaching strategies, and assessment methods to reflect the linguistic and cultural realities of all learners. Rather than viewing diversity as a challenge, they embrace it as a resource for learning, encouraging students to draw upon their cultural identities and multilingual repertoires as assets in the classroom.

Global citizenship education

Refers to a set of “pedagogical principles to empower students as critical beings to see the relevance of global issues in their own lives and to understand their “glocal” responsibilities (Lourenço & Simões, 2021, p. 87). The BOLD project expands this perspective adding the teacher education dimension (therefore considering the “glocal” responsibilities of future teachers).

Intersectionality⁴

Investigates how intersectional power relations influence social relations in societies marked by diversity, as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality considers that categories such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity and age, among others, are interrelated and mutually shaping. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining the complexity of the world, people and human experiences.” (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 15-16).

Service learning

Refers to an experiential educational method in which students engage in activities that address real human, social and environmental needs from the social justice perspective, by integrating community service into the curriculum to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities through action and critical reflection. Service learning underlines the connection between the service experience and academic goals, thus stressing the intentional integration of academic content with the service experience which would ensure that students not only engage in meaningful service but also reflect on and apply academic concepts to real-world situations.

Social activism

Refers to “actions and efforts taken to bring about social, linguistic, political, or environmental change in society. This involves influencing or changing policies, practices, or societal norms to address issues such as inequality, injustice, discrimination, or environmental degradation” (Duarte, Lourenço & Melo-Pfeifer, 2025).

Social justice

The equitable sharing of social power and benefits within a society” (Osborn, 2006).

⁴In the Portuguese version consulted by the authors: “A interseccionalidade investiga como as relações interseccionais de poder influenciam as relações sociais em sociedades marcadas pela diversidade, bem como as experiências individuais na vida cotidiana. Como ferramenta analítica, a interseccionalidade considera que as categorias de raça, classe, gênero, orientação sexual, nacionalidade, capacidade, etnia e faixa etária – entre outras – são inter-relacionadas e moldam-se mutuamente. A interseccionalidade é uma forma de entender e explicar a complexidade do mundo, das pessoas e das experiências humanas.” (Collins & Bilge, 2021, p. 15-16).

08

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09

Apendix

Appendix 1

Template for BOLD modules integration in teacher education curricula

OVERVIEW

Partner Add the name of the partner higher education institution here.	Duration Add the duration of the course unit/subject (annual/ semestrial; no. of hours).
Module(s)/unit(s) title Add the module(s)/unit(s) title(s) here.	Academic year Add the academic year here.
Study programme/degree Add the name of the study programme/degree.	No. of students Add the number of students enrolled in the course.
Course unit/subject and responsible teachers Add the name of the course unit/subject here and the names of the responsible teachers.	Rationale Write a brief justification for the inclusion of this module(s)/unit(s) in the course unit, highlighting the articulation with the goals, learning outcomes and contents. (max. 10 lines).

IMPLEMENTATION

Duration Add the number of hours you dedicated to the module(s)/unit(s) implementation.	Activities Describe the activities you staged during the implementation of the module(s)/unit(s) (role- playing, simulations, presentations, brainstorming, debates, analysis of case studies, concept mapping, ...).
Lesson type List the type of lesson: theoretical (lecture, discussion...), practical (group projects, project- based learning, inquiry-based learning, problem- based learning, field trip...).	Additional resources List any additional resources used.

FEEDBACK ASSESSMENT

Teacher feedback Share the highlights of the implementation of the module(s)/unit(s). Describe the main challenges you encountered while implementing the module(s)/unit(s). Add any other comments you might have regarding the implementation of the module(s)/unit(s). Add any outputs (photos would be nice).	Student feedback Share the students’ reaction to the activities and their learning outcomes (you may access their opinion regarding the module(s)/unit(s) in di erent ways: by asking them orally in class, by asking for a brief written reflection, ...).
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Appendix 2

Template for BOLD student projects for social action reports

OVERVIEW

Partner Add the name of the partner higher education institution here.	Academic year Add the academic year here.
Study programme/degree Add the name of the study programme/degree.	Course unit/subject and responsible teachers Add the name of the course unit/subject here and the names of the responsible teachers.
Duration Add the duration of the course unit/subject (annual/semestrial; no. of hours).	Rationale Write a brief justification for the inclusion of this module(s)/unit(s) in the course unit, highlighting the articulation with the goals, learning outcomes and contents. (max. 10 lines).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Type of project State whether the project is: face-to-face, virtual, hybrid, regional, national/ international.	Number of students involved/ Number of pupils involved Add the number of students involved in the project.
Community partner(s)/organizations participating in the project Add the name of the community partner(s) and of the organizations participating in the project.	Summary of the project Write a brief summary of the project (include: the need(s) in the community; purpose and service objectives; main activities carried out/to be carried out as to the preparation, organization, implementation and closing of the project).
Phases of project’s development Describe the main phases of the project development and implementation.	

Appendix 3

Template for BOLD student intermediate progress reports

OVERVIEW

Study programme/degree Add the name of the study programme/degree.	Academic year Add the academic year here.
Course unit/subject and responsible teachers Add the name of the course unit/subject here and the names of the responsible teachers.	No. of students Add the number of students enrolled in the course.
	Duration Add the duration of the course unit/subject (annual/ semestrial; no. of hours).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Quantity Analyze the degree of achievement according to the objectives you had set: what has changed in relation to the identified needs according to the indicators we had proposed?	Restorative approach to conflict What conflicts have arisen? What harm has been done? What is everyone's responsibility in this situation? How has the damage been repaired? Is there anything left to repair? How have you managed conflict factors related to linguistic and cultural diversity?
Quality What have you learned? What should be changed? What mistakes should be avoided? How can you improve? What have you learned about linguistic and cultural diversity?	Future What conclusions do you draw from what you have experienced? What continuity would you give it?
Humanity How did you feel? And now? What has been the feedback from the beneficiaries?	



Building on
Linguistic and
Cultural Diversity

