

# Service Learning as an innovative approach to build intercultural competence of university students

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**What:** project of implementation of Service Learning into a new elective course *Global Settings in Local Encounters*

**Where:** MBU-Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia

**Who:** SL team of university foreign language teachers working with groups of international students, potentially any students of any MBU faculty, including Erasmus students

**When:** starting with February 2020

## GELS structure:

- Introductory explanatory/instructional meeting
- Collaborative activities in foreign languages:
  - a) selection of a task/own design,
  - b) detailed planning,
  - c) participating/leading/implementing the activity,
  - d) continuous self-reflection (writing a reflective journal, group discussions)
- Preparing a report and/ or presentation
- Final evaluation session

## GELS service learning course - aims:



The project focuses on transforming MBU community into a plurilingual and intercultural edulab. Based on previous analysis in 2019, MBU prepared a long-term sustainable subject aiming at using the human resources at MBU in order to transform it into a plurilingually and intercultural diverse community of all university stakeholders, predominantly teachers, students, and other staff. Students in GELS subject will serve the whole MBU community and with the MBU community.

## GELS design and planning:

- *two-sidedness:* putting the aims and opportunities of academic learning to use in meeting the MBU community needs via service activities
- *based on two sources:* everyday experience of MBU students with the community, continuous reflection of experiences
- *3 key characteristics:* a) solidarity intentionality of the service learning project (based on real MBU community needs analysis – plans with the community of students), b) student protagonism: student-led service (GELS is based on students plans, cooperation, activities, reflection), c) pedagogical intentionality: linkage between learning and service
- *principles of a SL subject at MBU:* (1) concerning students: emphasis on their a) motivation, b) leadership, c) participation as citizens, d) growth in self-esteem, (2) concerning GELS teachers: emphasis on a) revitalization, b) student-centered teaching, c) autonomous learning, d) metacognition, e) development of knowledge and skills (problem solving), f) active diagnostics, g) confidence in the SL project
- MBU students led to be a) socially supportive, b) involved in social promotion, c) social development.

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A GELS student's reflective diary

