

QUESTIONS and RESPONSES:
PLANNING FOR THE SERVICE LEARNING VISIT
American International School of Zagreb
Questions from Amy McLean, Responses by Cathryn Berger Kaye

This document shows what we considered before Cathryn Berger Kaye's second visit to our school.

Objectives for Service Learning at AISZ and In-service with Cathy Berger Kaye

1. AISZ staff will acquire a level of understanding sufficient enough so that we have 100% staff participation in a Service Learning endeavor in the 2010-2011 school year.
2. All participants will join in a collaborative group to develop at least one Service Learning plan
3. AISZ will develop an awareness of Service Learning and establish a supportive base within the school and local community.
4. Teachers will develop strategies for working with hard to motivate students
5. IB teachers will have strategies for implementing Service Learning in their structured curriculum.

These objectives are quite specific to your coming to Zagreb to work with our staff. The positive piece is that, I believe, you will have a mostly captivated audience who has already bought into the idea of Service Learning but many who still have yet to get their feet wet. Also attending will be staff members who are new to Service Learning. We will also be inviting attendees from other CEESA schools. **Given the diversity of experience of the AISZ staff regarding Service Learning, what are your thoughts about how we advertise the in-service? Who is our target group?**

Response from CBK Appeal to what you know teachers are looking for:

- Practical ideas they can use right away in their classrooms
- The nuts and bolts of service learning, an easy-to-use, step-by-step process
- Highly interactive session
- Opportunity to collaborate with peers
- Resources that will help advance what they want to accomplish in their classrooms
- Relevance for their students *and* for themselves
- Increase opportunity to interact with the community in meaningful ways
- Food! Everyone wants good food!

The target group is the entire staff. Ask teachers who have attended other service learning professional development sessions who also have the respect of their peers—the ones good at influencing to assist in getting the word out person-to-person. Of course the head of school has a role to encourage and model by also attending.

Given that we want to imbed a culture of Service Learning at AISZ, **what are things we can do to promote, implement, and sustain Service Learning AISZ?** Things we have discussed are to have each teacher dedicate one of their annual professional development goals towards Service Learning. Another is to focus attention on Service Learning when hiring new staff. Another idea is to have a core group of teachers develop short, mid and long range goals for Service Learning at AISZ.

Response from CBK Your ideas are right on target, and this is exactly what I hope to come from within the school community: ideas that show initiative and fit your school. If you can begin with this list, you will continue to add as teachers and the community does progress. Important also is to encourage teachers to document what they are doing. You, Amy did this for your recent service learning experience using the GoToServiceLearning format (also found on this DVD in the Youth Service America section---Working with Elders). This helps establish credibility and while we don't; expect a teacher to carbon copy what another person does, having a historical reference to see what has been done and the impact is always beneficial. Creating the visual chart of service learning as you ultimately did (see **FAQ: How do we keep track of service learning progress?** on this DVD) also establishes a visual marker and lets teachers know that service learning is really happening, NOW!

When you come, we would like you to work separately with that core group to develop those goals. **Do you have suggestions for selecting members for this group? In working with a small group, how much time would you need to achieve our objective? Have you worked with small groups like this before to develop a plan of action for a school?**

Response from CBK Yes, I have worked with small groups for just this purpose in many international schools and also many schools and school districts in the United States. Members can both self-select if given the opportunity and also be invited—the teachers who just have a proclivity for this approach or seem curious and willing. Include administrators as well.

Regarding time, ideally from 3 hours to a half day to a full day can all be valuable, of course the more time the better. However, most important is initiating this conversation and knowing there will need to be follow-up. Also, refer to Chapter 17 of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* for many suggestions on how to keep this kind of a conversation alive, including using documents found on pages 252-254 that are designed for this purpose and can be downloaded from the book's CD-Rom.

Related to the idea of creating a culture of Service Learning at AISZ, I am wondering **what you have seen that works at other schools of a similar size?** One of the concerns from teachers was the issue of time. **Do you endorse carving a common time out during the week (or month) dedicated to cross curricular Service Learning collaboration? What is the role of a Service Learning coordinator in other schools that you have visited?**

Response from CBK Creating a culture of service learning requires, number one, the intention. The recognition that service learning is an ideal way to actualize the school's mission, and even to improve an already exemplary school environment. Professional development, which you are doing and building the capacity for **teachers within the school to lead service learning** is part of where you want to go. And where you are headed. Capturing the stories of what is being done is also so critical so the evidence is vivid and convincing. Providing resources and **time for teachers to plan and implement their ideas with administrative support also matters, and all of this is alive and well at AISZ.**

I do not recommend carving a time out for service learning as such, however as your program evolves you will need to see how time is managed. This needs staff discussion because occasionally students may miss one class for example to go on a valuable service learning outing. As long as this is reasonable I have seen this work easily. Discussing ahead of time and reaching faculty agreements helps.

For information about the role of service learning coordinators, please read **How are roles and responsibilities for service learning shared within international schools?** found in the FAQ section of this DVD.

Lastly, we have questions about having you work with students. We will definitely have you working with High School students and their teachers to promote leadership and responsibility through Service Learning. **Ideally, how much time would you want to work with them. Would 4 hours be sufficient? 6 hours?**

Response from CBK I have worked with students during one class period all the way to a full day and the time varies based on the intent and purpose of the work to be accomplished. In this situation, I recommend four hours with the students and then, based on other conversations we have had, additional time for select group of student leaders and special interest groups. You framed this quite well: the purpose being to work with the students and also to model the methods I use for engagement for the teachers and group leaders.

An Afterword. Following the session I held with the students, deemed highly successful by the students and teachers/administrators present, one high school senior, a local young man who just joined the community, ran to speak with the CAS coordinator. "I didn't know service could be this exciting!"he stated and then proceeded to explode with ideas.

