

SERVICE AS ACTION

Service as action is a foundational element of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP). It seeks to develop caring members of the community who act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and their environment. Service as action requires students to engage with their local community through community or personal projects and provides opportunities for students to explore, design, implement, and reflect on their efforts to positively impact their local environment. Through service as action experiences, students learn the value of community participation and gain a deeper understanding of the issues facing their immediate surroundings.

This report summarizes the findings from the research study by the Claremont Evaluation Centre (CEC) on implementation of services as action as part of the collaborative strategies.

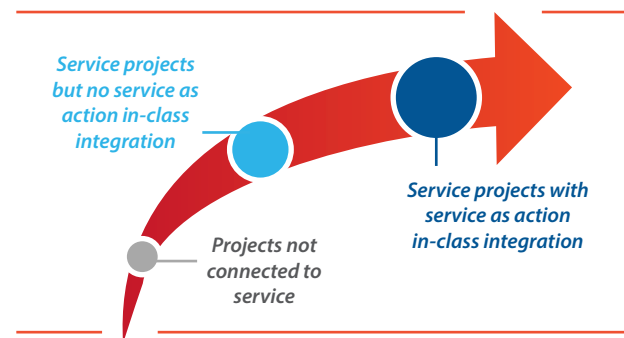
What does MYP service as action implementation look like across the world?
findings from teacher surveys (2017, 2018)

- Teachers indicate they find service as action an important part of the MYP: Next chapter programme.
- They believe that service as action not only helps students connect classroom content to the real world, but also helps them give back to the community.
- However, teachers find it difficult to provide students with actual opportunities to serve.
- There is general agreement that this strategy is best emphasized in MYP projects as opposed to the classroom.
- Although teachers generally met IB’s expectations for implementing service as action strategies, and the results were consistent from 2017 to 2018, they did so less frequently than with other strategies.



Implementation practices
findings from 2018 schools visits (27 schools)

Below you can find the trajectory of implementation of service as action in MYP schools.



Factors that allow for progression in the implementation of service as action are:

- 1) Projects that are not connected to activities that address local or global issues
- 2) Service projects developed but not integrated in class
- 3) Systems and practices in place that support service as action

In the **first category** students were generally asked to select a project that they found personally interesting although it may not be connected to service. Therefore, students at these schools varied in whether they used these projects as opportunities to engage with the

community or not. Activities such as one-time beach clean-up, a bake sale to raise money, play soccer or basketball satisfied school's service requirement.

But I will say that -- I've done a lot of personal projects, but I can't say that any of them were particularly focused on service as action.... – MYP teacher

...it's like you can make it have to do with making an impact on your community but you can also do something where it's something you do out of school or in school... – MYP student



In the **second category** fall around half the of schools visited by the teams from the Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) (13 out of 27). In some schools, multiple staff indicated that they had yet to embed service as action into the classroom because they have not figure out how to do it. We report here two views that capture the challenges facing MYP schools in implementing service as action in the class.

...we certainly get a lot more stand-alone projects, a lot more student-lead projects that are happening from our older students...our aim is... we'd like to find more ways to have it come out of the curriculum as well and I think that's been our struggle a little bit more, is how do you make that happen through the units of work?... – MYP teacher

Services as action is one thing, that's something that we had flagged in our evaluation, self-evaluation and that's also that was something that came back from the visiting team, it's not imbedded in the curriculum, the in-depth reflections that students have to do on ManageBac are very often not in-depth, just a statement and not all students are doing it – MYP Administrator



In the **third category** we find schools that provided support to students in engaging with local organizations and guiding them through the process. Schools in some cases provide students with a list of organizations they can contact without students being able to select a specific project. Particularly in private schools, there was more emphasis in students working with local organizations as a way to help the community (charity and volunteering were the two main assets for community engagement). Teacher support varied from little involvement with students doing most of the work (selecting a project, connecting with a local organization) to cases in which projects were teacher-driven, particularly regarding the community project.

In the community project that we do, we make a team and we have a teacher who is guiding us in how to do it but in itself, you are not assigned to "you have to do this" they give us the freedom to say what we want...You present your idea and they tell you if it is possible or not – MYP student

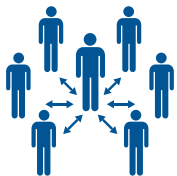


When schools incorporated service as action into the classroom, it was the administration/leadership that required some sections of units taught during the year to have an explicit service as action link. In one school for example, the MYP coordinator restructured the way the service as action requirements are implemented. For MYP years 1, 2, and 4, students participate in at least one fully developed service as action unit, while leaving MYP year 3 and MYP year 5 to the community and personal project requirement as per the guide.



SUPPORT

to the implementation of service as action



At many schools there are unique **service as action coordinator positions** as well as an ample number of **supervisors** to oversee and guide student projects. Coordinators are said to help with identifying community organizations for the school to pair with and check with supervisors to make sure that students are making progress on their projects.

Teachers at several sites are provided with enough **planning time** to integrate service as action into the classroom.



In-class time set aside for students to work on service as action projects.



The school requires that at least **one service as action unit be conducted per year** (as detailed in the text above).

BARRIERS

to the implementation of service as action

Given the amount of work for students to identify and connect with local organizations and carry out the projects paired with what it takes for teachers to help manage, coordinate and oversee these projects, service as action is **not given as much attention** as other strategies.



Legal/labour limitations prevent some schools from considering planning for service as action because the **demand it places on teachers** would mean that they would need to remove the requirements for other strategies.



A **limited teacher and coordinator understanding** as to how to integrate service as action into the classroom and unit plans as well as to manage and oversee community and personal projects.

Summary

- Across both data sources (teacher surveys and school visits), teachers and coordinators felt service as action was highly important, however connecting out of class projects with in-class activities occurred infrequently.
- Similar to survey findings, which indicate that teachers found it challenging to provide students with opportunities to help-solve real world problems in their community, a significant number of schools visited had project requirements that were not connected to service at all.
- In both surveys and site visits, when students got to choose their service projects, and/or their projects were interesting, they viewed them more positively.
- Key supports to frequent, well-integrated service projects were having:
 - designated service as action coordinator positions
 - sufficient student supervisors
 - ample planning and coordination time
- Key barriers to service as action were:
 - de-prioritization due to the overall demands of MYP implementation
 - limited teacher and coordinator understanding
 - insufficient systems to support implementation



Provocations

Can schools and local/global organizations not only develop collaboration but become partners in service?

How can schools develop projects that tackle community needs and allow students to reflect with the community about how the projects meet/did not meet their needs?

What strategies/processes facilitate the implementation and in-class integration of service as action in the specific school context?

What systems can ensure a protracted service learning experience and service learning class integration without overloading teacher planning and timetable (increase the demand)?

Background

In mid-2015, the IB commissioned the Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) to lead a multi-year research project on the MYP: Next chapter's implementation and impact. The CEC study provides a wealth of data about what the implementation of the MYP curriculum looks like around the world in critical curriculum components.

Based on this multi-year research, the IB has identified three themes that categorize nine high-quality implementation strategies for the MYP:

- Collaborative strategies
- Key strategies
- Optional strategies

The IB will disseminate the CEC research findings in form of reports for high-quality implementation strategies and many other resources to support schools in further implementing the MYP programme.
