SUPERHEROES Action Plan

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1. Introduction

The successful implementation of activities, tools and solutions to improve the awareness and understanding of SDGs among the school (educational) staff and student body requires a strategic vision and approach.

The work of single teachers taking action and empowering the students is not enough: the engagement of the whole school ecosystem is required, in order to make the implementation structural and systemic within the school context.

The SUPERHEROES School Action Plan supports you in applying SUPERHEROES throughout the whole school on a more strategic level, by addressing the school as a whole. It also offers you guidelines on how to raise awareness on the topic o SDGs and engage the relevant actors across the activities and also in the local challenges. As such, it supports the activities of school management and the teachers' body to elaborate a school-wide strategic plan allowing you to implement SUPERHEROES methodology and results in your institution.

The Action Plan provides a set of ideas and questions to help you to design your own approach and plan of action to SUPERHEROES which is tailored to the specific characteristics of your institution.

The different chapters include questions, checklist and tables you can use to develop your own plan of action, there are prepared so you can use them directly to fill in your thoughts, reflections and ideas. The plan assumes that you are the expert(s) of your school context, so what you need is getting useful insights and ideas on how to adapt SUPERHEROES to your school's needs.

1.1. *How to use the Action Plan*

You are a school manager who believes that the SDGs is a topic that should be addressed in your institution, and you think that the SUPERHEROES methodology and materials, applying the local challenges are an appropriate way to go about it.

Or, for example, you are a teacher - or a group of teachers - that believe that enhancing awareness and understanding on SDGs through the application of local challenges would benefit your students and increase their learning process,

You learnt about SUPERHEROES, and you would like to introduce its ideas, practices and philosophy within the context of your school.

When in introducing SUPRHEROES in your school context you need to be aware of the reasons inducing you to do that. You need to move from the idea that working on classroom and school climate is important in general, to the reflection on:
- WHY your school needs working on SDGs and use local challenges,
- WHAT are the practical goals you want to achieve
- HOW you think SUPERHEROES could help you reach such goals.

Addressing SDGs is very wide and general and needs to be declined considering the specificity of your institution and the practical benefit it could get by focusing on this topic.

To start your journey in introducing SUPERHEROES in your school, we have developed a series of questions which help you to define in a clear way why your school should consider SDGs of utmost importance. The answers to the questions not only contextualise your own plan of action but are powerful messages in your interactions with all involved in the design and future implementation of the action plan and allow you to interact and convince them and other stakeholders of the soundness of the journey you have embarked on.

2. How to explain the relevance of SUPERHEROES in your school

2.1. SDGs in Education

SDGs have a huge part to play in today's classrooms. As a blueprint for making the world a better place, these goals can help engage students and inform lesson plans. Let's take a look at the top 7 reasons why educators should make use of the SDGs in their classrooms.

1.They are good for the planet. SDGs are about more than awareness, though. They also break down each goal into a set of achievable sub-targets. Educators can use these sub-targets to show their students the ways in which they can make an impact on improving the world that they live in.

2. They are good for humanity. Students will get a greater knowledge of challenges faced not only in their own lives but also in the lives of others all around the world. These SDGs highlight the structures behind our society – economic, legal, and political – and their complexities.

3.They teach empathy to the students. This helps the development of students into more well-rounded citizens of the world, and shows them the ways in which they can make a difference in the future.

4.They give lesson plans a new perspective. The SDGs are an ideal filter through which to expand and enrich your lesson plans. Boost classroom engagement by demonstrating the real-world impact of the subjects your students are learning.

5.They are valuable educational source. It shouldn't be overlooked just how much research and information is packed into each of the SDGs..

6.They give focus to classroom discussion. By ensuring that the goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely, they can be used to give focus to classroom discussion.

7.They align with curriculum. They broach a remarkable range of traditional academic subjects such as geography, biology, social sciences, politics, economics, and more.

2.2. Introduction to the SUPERHEROES Methodology

SUPERHEROES is a programme which is aimed to increase the knowledge of environmental and social issues among youngsters. The project targets teachers, students from 12 to 16, and those interested in the development of these youngsters.

The specific objectives of the SUPERHEROES methodology are to:
- Increase awareness on environmental and issues in your own region.
- Increase awareness on environmental and social issues across Europe.

- Increase the active citizenship among students between 12 and 16 years old.
- Develop/improve intercultural skills among students between 12 and 16 years old.
- Increase level of English speaking among students between 12 and 16 years old.
- Develop an innovative learning approach towards challenge identification and problem solving in the field of the SDGs.

The methodology consists of several components that all together make up the programme:

1. SUPERHEROES Lesson Plan: guides teachers how they can support their students in going from getting to know the SDGs, to find and define challenges in their own region related to the SDGs, find solutions for challenges in other regions of Europe and communicate about it with foreign fellow students
2. SUPERHEROES e-Book: visually attractive document with information about the experiences of the implementation of the SUPERHEROES methodology by other teachers who have used the Lesson Plan to do so.
3. SUPERHEROES app: the place where students can upload their challenges, but also solutions, and where students, teachers, decision makers and any other member can also see the challenges and the solutions.
4. SUPERHEROES Action plans: enable teachers and managers to implement the SUPER HEROES methodology for the long term in their teaching activity and/or own school. The present guide is part of this component.

5. Why does SUPERHEROES provide value to your school?

To start your journey in introducing SUPERHEROES in your school, we have developed a series of questions which help you to define in a clear way why your school should consider the classroom and school climate of utmost importance. The answers to the questions not only contextualise your own action plan but are powerful messages in your interactions with all involved in its design and future implementation. Use the table below to describe the reasons why you think your school should consider SUPERHEROES and express these in terms of benefits for the school, the teachers, and the students.

Question	Answer
Why should your school focus on SDGs, considering curricular and extracurricular activities? Express the reasons using terms such as: to reduce, to improve, to increase, to decrease etc. focus on the overall school level and policy.	
What are your goals while introducing SDG related activities related in your institution? Focus as much as possible on concrete goals, on the basis of the knowledge you have of your school's context. For instance, saying that "enhancing the knowledge and understanding of SDGs key for (active) citizenship" is more concrete that saying that "enhancing SDGs would motivate students"	
Why should your teachers focus on the topic of SDGs and the use of local challenges? *Which type of benefits could they get from it?* Express the reasons using terms like: to reduce, to improve, to increase, to decrease etc… Focus as well on the improvements of teacher skills and capacities.	
What are the benefits of using the SUPERHEROES methodology on school level?	-

Express the reasons using terms such as: to reduce, to improve, to increase, to decrease etc…
 	
Focus on several aspects of the learning process:
 	
   -    Motivational aspects
 	
   -    Learning process related
 	
   -    Skills acquisition
 	
Evaluation and assessment of skills and knowledge	

6. Preparation: establishing the team

4.1. Teamwork

If you decide to introduce SUPERHEROES in your school, the first thing we invite you to consider is creating one or more teams/working groups Who should be involved?

The following table reports a set of questions that might help you in identifying which teachers and/or professionals in your institution would fit best the core group for implementing SUPERHEROES.

Questions	
Are there any teachers/professionals in your institution who you think could be more sensible to the topic of SDGs and the use of local challenges?	
*If **yes**, how can you clearly explain your concrete goals to them?* TIP: Discuss with them about their points of view on the topic. Trust their professionality and experience: they are in direct contact with the students and could give you useful ideas to develop an action plan which is more aligned to the school's actual needs.	*Write down your ideas on how you would do this.*
*If **not**, how can you effectively engage them in this topic?* ● How can you explain to them the importance of addressing the topic of SDGs and local challenges in your institution? ● How can SUPERHEROES help you in explaining your point of view?	*Write down your ideas on how you would do this.*
How many members should the core group have?	*Write down your ideas here.*
Which type of professionals should be involved? *Just teachers?* *Just educators/psychologists/social workers?* *A mix of all these professionals?*	*Write down your ideas here.*

Can the core group be open to students, too?	Write down your ideas here.
You could consider involving students to support teachers/professionals in disseminating SUPERHEROES within the school context. Most likely, in the starting phase the core group would be constituted only by professionals. However, if you manage to get positive results and SDGs spread out in your institution, maybe you can think of introducing some students in the core group	

4.2. Creating the core group

At this stage you should design the support structure that will be moving the further development and implementation of the strategy forward. Logic has it that the persons who will do so will come from those that have participated in the co-creation sessions and are willing and motivated to become drivers in the implementation process.

The core group should be small enough to be agile and effective, and big enough to ensure representation of school management, teachers' body, and educational support staff

A good idea to start is asking for volunteers from the sessions and select those which show the most enthusiasm about the exercise and strategy, as they are the ones that will mobilise and motivate all the others.

The core group will also oversee the progress of the implementation of the designed strategy. This does not mean that they will take all the decisions unilaterally: for each step in the design and implementation of the strategy you have to think which decisions can be taken by the team, and which should be consulted with the wider set of school management, teachers and educational support staff

Find the balance between agility and efficiency and the effectiveness of involving all in crucial decisions

It is important that all in the school have a clear idea on who is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy. The table below is an example for inspiration and highlights some of the roles in the structure, however it is up to you to find the structure and responsibilities that best fit your own situation. Make sure that the ones involved are motivated and willing to be part of the structure.

Responsibilities	Name and contact data of the person	Short description of the responsibilities (The ones indicated are examples to serve as inspiration)
Chairing the strategy committee		- Chair the strategy committee sessions. - Coordinate the implementation of the activities.
Secretary of the strategy committee		- Take notes and describe the roadmap sections. - Ensure the lists are up to date and published. - Send out invites for the strategy committee activities.
Member of the strategy committee		- Contribute to the definition and monitoring of the strategy. - Provide feedback on the evaluation.
Supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the strategy		- Monitor and ensure that the strategy is implemented as planned and within the agreed timeframe. - Monitor the KPIs y signal the chair if action is needed. - Implement the contingency plans
Evaluation of the strategy implementation		- In charge of evaluating the strategy implementation results after 1 year, including internal teacher evaluation. - Provide recommendations for future activities.

Ideally the list should be accessible in an easy way for all the teachers in the school. Notice boards in the teachers' room or storing it in the school's on-line repository are good ways to ensure access.

7. Co-designing the action plan

We believe that the introduction of the SUPERHEROES methodology, to be a success, should not be just a top-down process. The strategy and approach should be carried and supported by all involved in the teaching process, i.e., school management, teacher body and educational staff. In an educational innovation process this is even more pivotal: if the implementation is not done in a coherent way across the school and with the same level of quality and motivation, it will have a negative effect on the students' learning processes.

Thus, it is vital to jointly design the strategy involving representatives of at least the three aforementioned groups. However, if you consider it relevant you can also invite other stakeholders, e.g., parent or student association representative, school inspector, representative of the educational authorities, etc. The process of jointly creating the strategy is what we call a co-creation process.

> *Co-creation is the collaborative development of new values (concepts, solutions, products and services) together with experts and/or stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers etc.). Co-creation is a form of collaborative innovation: ideas are shared and improved together, rather than kept to oneself.*

When involving all the relevant players and stakeholders in the process of designing your strategy, the implementation process will be smoother, as management, teacher body and educational staff agree on the approach and different aspects of the plan, and all convey the same messages to others about it.

You can use different methods to identify your objectives (e.g., focus group, brainstorming, etc.), as long as you ensure that it is a joint, co-creative development process in which all participants have possibility to expresso their own voice. Here, we propose you to use the checklist below, based on the Pro Action Café methodology.

> *As a conversational process, the Pro Action Café is a collective, innovative methodology for hosting conversations about calls, questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between café tables, cross-pollinate ideas, and offer each other new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, organization or community.*

The checklist is for a co-creation session based, involving the relevant participants. The different rounds below can be realised in different sessions or in a session of one single day.

5.1.1. Before the session:

- Define the number of persons to participate. Bear in mind that it should reflect the size of your institution, be big enough to be valid throughout and small enough to be efficient. TIP: no less than 5 but no more than 15.

- Reflect whether you only want to involve representatives of school management, teacher body and educational support staff or if you also want to invite some other stakeholders. TIP: make sure that the other stakeholders represent only a small portion of the participants, they are not the ones that will actually implement the co-created strategy in your school.

- Explain why you feel the addressing school climate through a comprehensive strategic approach is important and explain why you propose a co-creation approach. TIP: keep it simple and concise, you are "selling your idea to them). If needed explain what co-creation entrails.

- Explain the idea for developing a strategy based upon SUPERHEROES to the potential participants and see who is motivated and willing to participate in the process. TIP: make sure the invited participants are aware about SUPERHEROES, and if not provide them with at least a summary.

- Invite the most willing and motivated representatives to the first session. TIP: explain that the design of the strategy is a process and that more sessions can be organised.

- Design the agenda and send it out to participants well before the session.

5.1.2. During the session:

- The setting should promote easy communication and cooperation. TIP: Circle with chairs is suggested for the joint sessions/ presentations. 2-4 tables with chairs for teamwork sessions (1 table per 3-5 participants). Flipcharts, paper, post-its, markers and pens.

- Round 1: "Why should our school work on the topic of classroom and school climate?" Use the questions from section 2, and present your replies as initiator to these questions. The aim is to reach a consensus on the reasons why all feel the strategy is necessary. Expected duration: 30 to 45 minutes.

- Round 2: Based upon the reasons for working on the topic of classroom and school climate on school level, the teams define their main goal for strategy, they can write it out, draw it, etc. The ideas are then presented or put up on the wall and discussed among all. Aim is to reach maximum consensus on the overall aim and goal of the strategy. TIP: tell teams not only to focus on a short-term perspective but also on the long term and think even 5 years ahead. Expected duration: 30 to 45 minutes.

- Round 3: Ask the teams to take the overall goal as a starting point and define the (specific) objectives, ask them to bear in mind that these should be SMART (see below). The objectives are then presented and discussed, with the aim of reaching consensus on the final set of specific objectives. Expected duration: 60 minutes.

> *What is a SMART strategy?*
> - *S is for Specific: directly related to the overall goal of the strategic roadmap and showing a direct relation to the use of digital tools across the school.*
> - *M is for Measurable: you should be able to measure whether the objective is reached or progress towards its realisation is being made.*
> - *A is for Achievable: make sure the objective is realistic and achievable within the set timeframe of the strategic roadmap.*
> - *R is for Realistic: make sure that it is realistic, make sure you are not overambitious (or under ambitious);*
> - *T is for Timebound: set a timespan for the objective, e.g. to be reached within 6 months, 1 year etc.*

For each objective you have defined revise whether all aspects of the above are valid, if not go back and redefine your objective until they all are.

- Round 4: "Where to go from now?" Joint discussion group in which the participants revise first the results from the former rounds. And ask them to answer the question:
  - What are the next steps we could take, to make the strategy a reality?
  - Who will be the main persons driving the process forward and ensure that the steps indicated in the next sections are executed?

Tip: it might be a good idea to do this in a separate session, so participants have had time to digest the results from the former rounds and start with fresh energy.

8. Implementation

6.1. Objectives

Once you have designed the strategic objectives, it is time to land the strategy and turn these strategic objectives in concrete steps. Making a strategy operational means translating each of the objectives into smaller steps, each with their own sub-objectives and deadlines.

It is important to bear in mind the boundaries present within the school, such as infrastructure, but also the time which can be freed up from the curricular and extra-curricular activities for the actual implementation of the steps defined. Do not overstretch, as this might lead to reduced motivation. Not only the core group, but everyone involved and affected by the implementation of SUPERHEROES needs to be able to see the impact it is generating and what their roles and responsibilities are.

The table below shows you how you could define the subobjectives and specific steps for a strategic objective, this exercise should be done for each of the strategic objectives you have defined. Again, here the approach needs to be a co-creation one and you can use the Pro Action Café checklist of Chapter 2 to organise the sessions and apply the same approach. This way you ensure there is consensus in the core group on how to process.

Strategic Objective	*Define the subobjectives*	*Define the steps you will take to achieve the subobjectives*	*Define the deadline for completing the step*
Write down the strategic objective	*1)*	1.1 1.2 1.3 Etc.	
	2)	2.1 2.2. 2.3	
	3)		
	4)		
	Write as may subobjectives you think to be necessary		

6.2. Limits

Before implementing the action plan you need to have a clear idea on the boundaries and limits of your reality. The table below helps you to do so, giving examples of possible boundaries and/or limits: use it to fill in the ones applicable to your school.

Question	Answer
What is the (technological) infrastructure or your school and/or classroom? How does this limit the practices TIP: Analyse the current infrastructure in terms of space, equipment and technology. Create a table in which you list all the items available. In the column next to it describe if and how it limits the adoption of certain practices. *that can be used?*	
What is the pedagogical philosophy and policy of your school and does this limit the practices that can be implemented? TIP: If the answer is no move to the next question, if yes please analyse carefully if the approach needs adaptation in view of the uptake of SUPERHEROES and the implementation of the proposed practices.	
Do the educational authorities have a specific policy with regards to classroom & school climate, i.e., do they allow schools to freely follow their own ways or are there limitations? TIP: Contact your educational authorities and ask them whether they allow for you to design your own strategy or not.	
What is the level of awareness of your students about the topic of classroom and school climate? How does it affect the practices that can be selected & implemented? TIP: Analyse which practice requires a level of knowledge and/or awareness beyond the one of your students.	

6.3. Start the implementation process

Now it is time to start working on the classroom and school level, collect results and draw conclusions and insights on how to proceed further. Before starting you need to consider at least three parameters, which are listed in the table below. Such parameters allow you to develop a clear setting to start the implementation process and constantly monitor the activities. Of course, feel free to add as many parameters as you think are necessary to you and your team.

Type of participants	Reason for this choice
Students *From the same class?* *Students from different classes?* *Same age? Different age?*	
Professionals*?* *Teachers?* *Professionals in education and psychology?* *Blended groups?*	
Students and Professionals together	

Number of people involved	Reason for this choice
How many groups? *Just one group?* *More than one group?* *Minimum and maximum number of people involved?*	

Timeframe	Reason for this choice
How long should the implementation last? *How many practices should be proposed?*	

All the questions indicated are examples to serve you as inspiration

6.4. Identify the expert teachers

The idea here is to ask teachers whether they have specific expertise or knowledge related to one or more of the SDGs, and specifically if they have used it in their teaching activity.

Ask the teachers on this list to indicate under which circumstance they have used SDGs in class, whether they consider themselves a beginner or advanced user on the practice and ask permission for them to be contacted by other teachers of the school in case of queries.

Ideally the list should be accessible in an easy way for all the teachers in the school, notice boards in the teacher room, or storing it in the school's on-line repository are good ways to ensure access. Make sure the list is always updated, so regularly scan your teachers for new tools, new uses, or changes in levels. Ask the teachers on the list if they would be willing to give a short session on the SDG to other teachers interested.

Name of the SDG	Name and contact data of the teacher that used it	Setting in which the SDG was used	Level

9. Monitoring progress

As inherent part of the strategy you need to ensure that it will be properly monitored and evaluated. Once you have co-created the strategy and defined the operation plans, it is time to reflect on the monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the strategy needs a quantitative as well as a qualitative component.

The quantitative monitoring and evaluation are done through the use of KPIs, that is Key Performance Indicators. Choosing the proper KPIs to focus on is the first step towards measurable improvement and thus success of your action plan. What can be and is measured, gets improved. choosing the right KPIs relies upon a good understanding of what is important for the action plan of your school.

> *A KPI is a type of performance measurement (the process of collecting, analysing and/or reporting information regarding the completion of a task with application of knowledge, skills and abilities of an individual, group, organization, system or component). It evaluates the success of an organization or of a particular activity (such as the implementation and progress of the action plan).*

Make sure you choose the KPIs that are directly related to the objectives and goals of your action plan. It seems obvious, but you could get lost in detail when defining KPIs and lose sight of the bigger picture.

7.1. Defining your KPIs

The table below helps you defining your KPIs for implementing SUPERHEROES in your institution. Take the subobjectives defined in the action plan and identify the related KPIs for each. Get at least 3 KPIs per objective. If you need more examples go on-line and do a search for indicators related to the implementation of innovative learning approach based on SDGs in education and get the inspiration you need.

Objective	Quantification of the objective	How to monitor/measure	Related KPIs
EXAMPLE: Permeation of SDGs by the teacher body in their courses	At least 70% of the teachers use (part of) SUPERHEROES within their regular teaching activities	6-monthly internal survey among teacher body	Number of teachers using SUPERHEROES regularly expressed as a % of the total teacher body

Beside the quantitative measurement on the KPIs, you need a qualitative assessment. The qualitative part of the monitoring and evaluation is to gain knowledge about the perception and experience of school management, the teacher body and educational support staff in the implementation of the action plan. There are different methods to be used, such as discussion groups; focus groups or interviews.

Also, qualitative assessment gains insight into what is behind the numbers of the KPIs. Doing this exercise once a year with the idea on improving the action plan can be sufficient. Many schools already have these kind of evaluation processes implemented, e.g., for teacher evaluation and embedding the evaluation of implementation of the strategy into this activity is thus advisable.

7.2. Evaluating progress & impact

From time to time you and your team should revise the action plan, following the process defined in the present document, but using as a starting point the already existing action plan. Take the contents of the roadmap and reflect and re-assess all its content and update it for the latest developments, being them technological, pedagogical or political.

In this way your action plan is always up to date and adapted to the changing environment.

The table below helps you define a timeframe for revising your action plan. It provides you with questions focused not only on what did not work, but also on what DID work. This type of questions, help you reflect on how to effectively implement your work.

Questions	Answer
How often should you revise your action plan?	
Who is in charge of the revision?	
What are three elements that have been working in your action plan, so far?	
What are three elements in your action plan you would change?	
What are three positive things you have learnt in implementing SUPERHEROES in your institution, so far?	
How could the things you learnt help you doing the strategical changes you want/need?	
What resources do you have at the moment that could help you maintaining the elements that are already working in your action plan in the future? *TIP: Think about all type of resources (i.e., related to people, logistics, technology, etc.)*	
What resources do you have at the moment that could help you maintaining the changes you want/need in your action plan in the future? *TIP:* *Think about all type of resources (i.e., related to people, logistics, technology, etc.)*	