

My Servant Leadership Project Report

By Diana Edemova, student at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University and participant in the Co-Serve International Kyiv Academy 2016

After completing the ISLP course at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Maria Cherpak suggested that Tanya Burambayeva, Katya Krasina, Nina Romashenko and I teach servant leadership and community building principles to students in a local school in Kyiv. This idea was interesting to us. However, we wondered how school children would respond to our new ideas about leadership. Would they accept these ideas? Would they pay attention to us, as university students, when we shared with them about leadership? After all, we were only three years older than them.

This project was a big challenge for us, especially because we each planned to become future teachers. In coming to the class of school students Maria suggested, we decided that we must have a specific plan, one that created a positive atmosphere. After their regular teacher left the classroom, we asked the students to do something unusual—something we had experienced in the ISLP program at our university. We asked them to arrange their desks in a circle. Soon everyone felt comfortable with this new arrangement.

We also explained that servant leadership was not part of their normal school curriculum. Their participation would be voluntary. No one would be forced to stay in the class. Some of the students decided not to continue. They explained that they had after school tutors and they did not have time for this program; some did not have a desire to study leadership. Those who stayed in the class had a real desire to learn about leadership. For those who decided to stay, we offered to meet once a week after their regular school lessons.

To our surprise and pleasure, every time they came to meet with us we noticed their positive spirit—they came with smiles and they gladly participated in discussions. They had many ideas and thoughts to share about the principles of servant leadership. The most interesting aspect of our lessons for our students was that each lesson involved activities. At the end of each class session, we introduced them to a game that summed up the topic of the lesson. This process helped them see how each principle worked in actual practice.

We soon noted that the students in our class became a team. In fact, the four of us felt like part of the team as we learned together. Marshall Christensen visited the final session of our servant leadership classes and congratulated us for the success of our project. The head mistress of the school also visited



During my participation in Co-Serve's ISLP course.



At the final session of our leadership classes with pupils in a local school.

our class and expressed great interest in offering this program to future students. She and Dr. Christensen actually participated in the graduation ceremony, helping us give certificates to each student.

Our students were happy and we were proud of them. After their graduation, each student told us that the classes were interesting, instructive and useful. Their “thank-yous” were our reward.

Ira Muha, one of the students, told us that “These lessons weren’t only informative, but also exciting. I began to understand better not only English, but also that we were friends who demonstrated what it means to complete tasks as a team. This training was unusual for me. Thank you for making it possible.”

Another student, Nastya Ovsty, said: “Thank you for this leadership course. Now I have a lot of new information, not only about leadership but about my classmates who are my friends. You helped me improve my English and you helped me become a real leader in life. Thank you very much for all you have done for us.”