# Community-based pedagogy and solidarity practices in teacher education: A case study

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## Abstract

This paper explores the way 'solidarity identities' are built through students' participation in social justice activities. Throughout the course 'Pedagogy of Happiness and Learning Communities' implemented in the Department of Early Childhood Education at University of Thessaly, students were involved in community-based groups focusing on social justice practices (i.e., supporting education activities of children protection centers, preparing meals with community groups and Churches). Forty-three students participated in the action research. They carried out weekly-base social activities assigned by the community groups throughout the 2022 Spring semester. During the implementation of hands-on social activities, students had to develop academic tasks related to (a) keeping detailed record of their participation (i.e., personal diaries, photo albums), (b) reflecting on and interpreting their solidarity actions (i.e., events interpretation, evolution of perceptions and ideas), (c) as well as drawing informed conclusions (i.e., connecting theory with practice, understanding their own development process). Data analysis shows that students were able to develop interrelated identities on their personal development ('personal identity'), citizen actions ('social justice identity'), and their academic empowerment ('student identity'). In conclusion, we support the idea that students negotiated and formed 'solidarity identities' that led them to manage a number of emotions (i.e., anxiety, frustration, love, sympathy), as well as develop key-competencies necessary to implement solidarity practices (i.e., collaboration, planning, critical thinking).