PROCEEDINGS

UNISERVITATE
Service-learning in Catholic Higher Education

UNISERVITATE COLLECTION

I Global Symposium UNISERVITATE

October 29th-30th, 2020

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Service-learning:
academic excellence and community engagement in Higher Education

1.2

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Uniservitate Collection

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ABOUT US

Uniservitate

Uniservitate is a global programme for the promotion of service-learning (SL) in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs). It is an initiative of Porticus and is coordinated by the Latin American Center for Service-learning (CLAYSS).

The programme's objective is to generate a systemic change through the institutionalisation of service-learning as a tool for Higher Education Institutions to fulfil their mission of offering an integral education to new generations and involving them in an active commitment to the problems of our time.

Porticus

Porticus coordinates and develops the philanthropic endeavours of the Brenninkmeijer family, whose social commitment stretches back to 1841, when Clemens and August Brenninkmeijer founded the C&A company, starting a tradition of doing good while doing business.

Several businesses, charitable foundations and philanthropic programmes joined Porticus and expanded through numerous family initiatives.

Since its foundation in 1995, Porticus has grown to become one of the most committed institutions working to address the challenges of our time, to improve the lives of those most in need and to create a sustainable future where justice and human dignity flourish.

Porticus has two goals that guide the way it works: to listen to and learn from the people it seeks to help, and to act on evidence that demonstrates what works.

CLAYSS

The Latin American Center for Service-Learning - CLAYSS - is a leading organisation for the promotion of service-learning in Latin America, and a worldwide reference. It promotes the development of service-learning in both formal and non-formal education, and advises policy makers, NGO leaders, communities, educators and students.

The UNISERVITATE Collection

The UNISERVITATE Collection is an editorial project of CLAYSS (Latin American Center for Service-Learning) in articulation with Porticus.

It is aimed at Catholic Higher Education professors and authorities, other educational institutions, specialists in Service-Learning, ecclesiastical leaders, as well as the general public interested in education and social change.

With the contribution and collaboration of outstanding international academics and specialists, its objective is to offer contributions from different regions and to share multicultural perspectives on topics of interest related to spirituality and the pedagogy of Service-Learning in the world.

Each digital book is published in English, Spanish and French, and can be downloaded free of charge from the Uniservitate website: https://www.uniservitate.org.

THIS PUBLICATION

This publication collects the proceedings of the I Global Symposium *Uniservitate*, held on October 29th-30th, 2020, in virtual form. The texts respect the order of the presentations made during the two days of the symposium.

The “Spirituality and service-learning” section also includes two presentations developed within the framework of the *Uniservitate* Training for Trainers Course.

All the texts have been minimally edited to facilitate their reading. At the bottom of some of the presentations there is a link to the slides used in each case. In addition, a link to the video recording of each of the panels has been included at the end of each chapter. All the audiovisual material of the event is available in Spanish, English and French on the YouTube channel CLAYSS Digital: https://www.youtube.com/user/clayssdigital/playlists

2. SERVICE-LEARNING: ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

María Nieves Tapia

María Nieves Tapia is the founder and director of the Latin American Center for Service-Learning (CLAYSS, www.clayss.org). Between 1997 and 2009, she initiated and coordinated the national service-learning programmes of the Argentine Ministry of Education, "School and Community" (1997-2001) and Solidarity Education (2003-2010), as well as the Solidarity Schools Programme of Buenos Aires City (2002-2003).

A graduate in History, in 2019 she was appointed member of the Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship (ACES). She is a founding member of the Board of the International Association for Research in Service-Learning (2005).

She has been invited to lecture at universities and organisations on the five continents, and has served on the juries of numerous national and international educational awards, including the Presidential Award "Escuelas Solidarias" in Argentina and the "MacJannet" Global Prize for Global Citizenship.

She is the author of numerous books and articles in Spanish, English, Portuguese and Italian.

It is a real pleasure for us to start this new cycle of symposia of the *Uniservitate* programme, which has just been introduced. As María Rosa said, although the programme is going to focus on some central aspects of Catholic Education, it aims to be a contribution to the field of service-learning worldwide and, therefore, on this first day, both my talk and the panel that will follow will give an overview of the problems that universities in any part of the world, of any creed, of any form of management have in common.

My idea is to present service-learning as the convergence of academic excellence and social engagement in Higher Education. Perhaps the title is a little provocative because we know that oftentimes in the minds of many of our colleagues we either work towards academic excellence or we work towards engagement. That is why I wanted to begin with a quote from a group of students at the School of Medicine of the National University of Tucumán after winning the Service-Learning Practice Award in Argentina: "For some

universities the object of their existence is academic excellence. We consider that the reason for our existence is service to people and academic excellence, its best tool" (PNES, 2006:11). I think these words perfectly explain what we are talking about. We are talking about universities that do not consider that academic excellence is an end in itself, i.e. a means of doing better in the rankings or having many publications in reputable academic journals, but rather that all that research, all that search for knowledge, all that academic production, only makes sense if it makes sense for our people.

Since we are in the context of a global programme, I would like to start by pointing out that this idea of the social mission of Higher Education is as old as Higher Education itself.

Historians claim that the first Higher Education Institutions were those that originated in Sumeria, in Egypt, in the ancient Chinese Empire or in the ancient American empires of the Maya, Aztecs and Incas. These early forms of Higher Education had the clear objective of training professionals and civil servants to serve the administration of these empires and, therefore, to serve the management of public affairs, the common good and kings, who were at the same time priests or incarnations of divinity. In Greece, on the other hand, Higher Education was developed separately from religion and centred on philosophy as an exploration of all forms of wisdom. In the Middle Ages both in the Islamic world and in Christian Europe theology again took centre stage. Modernity, on the other hand, would clearly distinguish between secular and religiously affiliated universities, and science would occupy a central place, in many cases as an end in itself, without any reference to the context or its social meaning. It is from the medieval and modern European heritage that the model of Higher Education often referred to as "the ivory tower" emerged, because of its voluntary isolation from the context.

"For some universities the object of their existence is academic excellence. We consider that the reason for our existence is service to people and academic excellence, its best tool".

These different models of Higher Education that were developed throughout history were always indigenous to a culture; that is to say, specific to a particular time period, context and way of thinking. However, and bearing in mind that the *Uniservitate* family is present in all the regions of the world, it is necessary to remember that many regions were colonised from the European expansion of the 15th century onwards, and models of Higher Education which did not come from our own history, culture and context were imposed. These colonial models–Salamanca or Cambridge from the 16th century, the Napoleonic and Humboldtian models of the 19th century–were often imposed uncritically,

and it was only in the last decades of the 20th century that we began to reflect–especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America–on the need to "decolonise" Higher Education.

However, long before the academic discussions on decolonisation, models of Higher Education that attempted to respond to their specific problems emerged in the former American colonies after independence.

Following its wars of independence, the United States began to expand westward, and in this context, the so-called *Land-grant universities* were founded. From Lincoln onwards, the Federal State guaranteed land and resources for the founding of Higher Education Institutions specifically aimed at promoting agricultural development in the regions conquered from the indigenous peoples, to train the new settlers in the technologies and academic disciplines that would enable them to achieve a better standard of living. This model of university, pragmatically rooted in a very specific context, clearly distanced itself from the university models bequeathed by the colonial heritage and the "ivory tower."

Something similar happened with the Latin American University Reform movement, which explicitly rebelled against colonial legacies in an attempt to generate a university that worked "not for itself, but for the people," as one of the first rectors of the UNAM (Autonomous National University of Mexico) stated. Mexico was the first country in the world to include in its Constitution in 1917 the mandate that university graduates had to provide social service, and since 1945, no one can graduate in Mexico without having fulfilled at least 360 hours of "Social Service." The University Reform movement was brought about in 1918 by the active role of the students of the National University of Cordoba, in Argentina, and quickly became a continental movement that sought to achieve the autonomy of the University from governments, the co-government by professors, alumni and students, and that also proposed a new concept of "Extension."

The concept of "Extension" emerged at the end of the 19th century in Cambridge, Great Britain, as a synonym for scientific dissemination and the inclusion of new audiences for Higher Education. The term clearly expresses the vision of the "ivory tower," which needs to "extend" itself beyond the walls, which leaves the cloister in order to reach out to the common people, and which perceives what is outside the campus as distant and alien. The European model of extension basically consisted in the voluntary service of some scholars for scientific dissemination, with greater or lesser support from university governance structures. In contrast, in the models that resulted from the Latin American University Reform, Extension is also understood as a "permanent function" of Higher Education, which encompasses not only the dissemination and the inclusion of new subjects in the University, but also all the activities carried out at the service of society in general: voluntary service,

social impact projects, knowledge transfer, medical, legal and cultural services open to the public, and many other actions.

Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, a university model that was different from that of the "ivory tower" emerged, a model centred on three pillars or fundamental missions: together with Teaching and Research, Extension was defined as the "third pillar." This characterisation is very old in the United States and Latin America, but it is still a novelty in other regions of the world.

However, this vision has been questioned for decades, because in practice the "three pillars" have meant that Extension has been disconnected from academic life and this has generated a sort of "Cinderella complex," the feeling that the social mission is less important than Teaching and Research, and has often created a false antinomy between "the engaged" and "the serious academics." There is an assumption that, on the one hand, there are those who publish and study–the "serious"–and, on the other hand, there are those of us who engage with reality and who are not so clearly contributing to the advancement of science and teaching. We must acknowledge that there are solidarity activities that have little impact on the production of knowledge or on the training of our students, but it is also necessary to recognise that in the last decades there have been numerous examples of projects that bring together community engagement, engaged research and student learning, in other words, what we call "service-learning."

Throughout the 20th century, different conceptualisations of the social mission of Higher Education have helped us to see the complexity of this mission. At the same time, the succession and juxtaposition of different conceptualisations has generated in almost all languages a real "Babel Tower" with regard to the social mission:

- At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the first formulations of terms, such as "extension," "social service," and later "social projection" or "liaison with society" emerged. All these terms shared the common feature of being conceived as outreach movements from within the cloister to an outside world that was perceived as alien and radically different.
- In the 1960s, in the wake of the youth movements, other visions began to appear, which placed greater emphasis on students' protagonism and on the formative value that social activities had for them. This mid-20th century period saw the popularisation of voluntary service and terms such as "community service" and "community engagement." It was precisely in the late 1960s that the term "service-learning" was coined in the United States.

- Since the 1970s, the idea that an engaged university is a university whose research is committed to reality, based on the interaction with the communities and other knowledge–autochthonous, ancestral, popular–has been further developed. This movement, which continues to this day, is generating new models of situated research, in dialogue with the community and with the participation of diverse social actors. Depending on the region, it is associated with "participatory action research" promoted in Latin America by Fals Borda, "community-based research," what in Europe are called "science shops," or the more comprehensive term "engaged research."
- Towards the end of the 20th century, two terms that encompass all student, teaching and institutional activities became more widespread and stronger: "engagement" of Higher Education Institutions and "University Social Responsibility (USR)." These terms are synonymous in many countries and, in others, they generate controversy; but both refer to the social mission from the integral and multiple nature of its expressions within institutional policies.

In an attempt to bring order to a Babel of multiple and diverse terminologies of the 20th century regarding University social engagement, I would like to present the graph in Figure 1, which attempts to give an account of the reflection that has been taking place in these first two decades of the 21st century. As can be seen, in addition to the traditional "three pillars,"there is what many authors call the "fourth pillar" of institutional management, i.e. the pillar that defines, accompanies and makes viable and sustainable from the management point of view the general policies of engagement or USR of the institution as a whole.

As the graph shows, service-learning is precisely at the heart of this new paradigm, in that place where Extension, Teaching and Research converge, in an institutional dialogue with the community. In addition to service-learning, we recognise other spaces of social engagement that allow the intersection of and connection with some of the missions, such as outreach courses, engaged research, or what is typical of each pillar, such as Voluntary service, Research and Teaching.

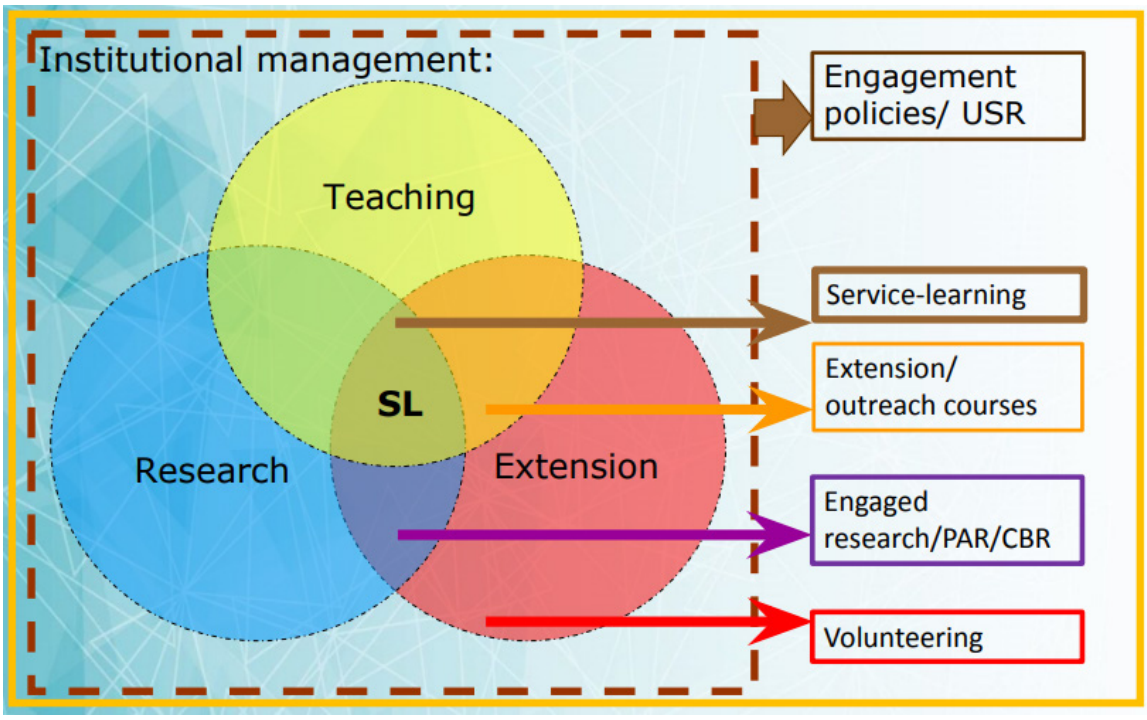

FIGURE 1: Towards an integrated model of institutional management of social mission.

More and more we realise that we need institutional policies that conceive of Research, Teaching, and Extension as a means of engaging in dialogue with the community, of making the walls of what used to be the ivory tower more permeable. Yet "permeable" not only in terms of reaching out to the community, but also in terms of walls that let it in, so that what we learn in the community has an impact on our way of teaching, on our research objectives, on our ways of influencing the community. So far it may all sound very theoretical, except to those who are already practising it, but the truth is that, as Younger (2009:22), the British scholar, says, "social engagement is no longer seen as a 'third pillar' but rather as a critical approach to our teaching and research activities."

We need institutional policies that conceive of Research, Teaching, and Extension as a means of engaging in dialogue with the community, of making the walls of what used to be the ivory tower more permeable. Yet "permeable" not only in terms of reaching out to the community, but also in terms of walls that let it in, so that what we learn in the community has an impact on our way of teaching, on our research objectives, on our ways of influencing the community.

In this regard, I would like to present as a first case the experience of the group of students I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation. The School of Medicine of the National University of Tucumán, a public university in the north of Argentina, established compulsory community internships decades ago. Once medicine undergraduates finish their traditional stay in the teaching hospital, they have to do six months of "internships" which can take place in health centres in the outlying areas of Tucumán city or in rural areas in the northwest of Argentina. During the internship period, the future doctors do not only do pre-professional practice, but also carry out research on issues affecting public health in the areas where they are practising.

One of the first experiences began during a very serious crisis of child malnutrition in the province. Having noticed that families in the urban periphery went to the health centre only when the children presented acute conditions that could not always be improved, the students decided to leave the health centre and go knocking on the doors of the precarious houses in the neighbourhood to offer to diagnose the children in order to identify malnutrition early and treat it in its primary stages and to anticipate the extreme cases before they arrived at the hospital and it was already too late. During the two years of the project, these students saved the lives of more than 450 malnourished children and accompanied them until their full recovery.

In addition to having saved all these lives, they developed a research project asking themselves why malnutrition was so high in their city, in their province, and they discovered that one of the keys was the abandonment of the practice of breastfeeding. This research led to an outreach project in which students in the first years of their studies went to maternity waiting rooms in public hospitals to train future mothers on the importance of breastfeeding.

All of this is the movement of the University at the service of the community, but this experience also had a way back into the institution because the students questioned how much they–as future doctors–had been trained (or not) in the importance of breastfeeding, how much importance the university was giving to this issue, which was a fundamental Public Health problem in their region. As a result of the students' research, the project prompted a curriculum reform and the establishment of a course on "Breastfeeding and Public Health." It is this positive cycle of service and learning by serving that occurs not only in the lives of our students, but also in the lives of our professors and our institutions.

As can be seen, these service-learning projects intertwine Teaching and Research with a very clear component of solidarity action at the service of public health.

These like so many other experiences around the world–tell us that we are facing a new institutional paradigm, which is not just a pedagogical innovation. Service-learning

is indeed an innovation; it is part of the great family of active pedagogies, of the search for meaningful learning centred on the learner, such as problem-based learning, *learning by design* and so many others. Like all these innovations, service-learning involves innovating in the teaching role, coming down from the chair to take on a more accompanying role, learning together with our students, letting reality pose the questions that perhaps we had not planned for the course. This is a new paradigm from the epistemological point of view because it implies an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, meta-disciplinary construction of knowledge around problems that are significant and relevant to our contexts. It implies establishing serious, substantive dialogues, not folkloric ones, between academic knowledge and indigenous and popular knowledge. Finally, it is also a shift in the institutional paradigm because it involves leaving the ivory tower to become an institution that functions as part of collaborative networks, seeking not to be beneficiaries but–above all–allies, co-creators, co-producers of knowledge, co-teachers.

These service-learning projects intertwine Teaching and Research with a very clear component of solidarity action at the service of public health.

We could talk a lot about this, but I would simply like to summarise this paradigm shift by referring to something that Pope Francis said at the Catholic University of Portugal and which I believe that applies to any university. He says that:

> It is right for us to ask ourselves: How do we help our students not to regard a university degree as synonymous with greater position, as synonymous with more money or greater social prestige? They are not synonymous. Do we help this preparation to be seen as a sign of a greater responsibility in relation to today's problems, the needs of the poorest, and care for the environment? It is not enough to analyse and describe reality; it is necessary to generate space for real research, debates that generate alternatives for today's problems. How important it is to be practical!.[1]

In the Pope's words, service-learning is important because it helps us to be *practical* and to accomplish. Our universities are often diagnoses factories. With service-learning projects, on the other hand, the diagnoses become meaningful as starting points for action, and help us to realise the social mission of the university, so that everything we research and study is translated into alternatives, into solutions at the service of our brothers and sisters.

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1 Pope Francis. Audience with the Community of the Catholic University of Portugal. Rome, 26th October, 2017. https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/10/26/171026c.html

Consider the case of the Garittea Project of the Xaverian University in Cali, an area that is famous in other parts of the world partly for its good coffee and partly for its tragic history of violence, drug trafficking and the forty years of civil war that ravaged this region of Colombia. For decades, the decline in the international price of coffee has been discouraging small producers, and various organisations have been working together to organise cooperatives of small coffee growers in search of solutions. In this context, the Agronomy students and their professors explored alternatives and trained the producers so that they could produce high quality organic coffee, thus adding greater value to their production. In turn, the Economics, Marketing and Design students helped to generate a business plan, to develop their own brand–Garittea and to design the packaging and a distribution circuit that would allow direct marketing "from the crops to the campus." To this end, the Faculty of Architecture contributed with the design of the "casa alero" (a sustainable building, built with local materials and a local style, for whose design the Faculty of Architecture had won an international award). The award-winning model became a real construction, and today it is home to the "Café Garittea," a café in a central location on the university campus, from where the new organic coffee starts to be distributed to the city of Cali.

With service-learning projects, on the other hand, the diagnoses become meaningful as starting points for action, and help us to realise the social mission of the university, so that everything we research and study is translated into alternatives, into solutions at the service of our brothers and sisters.

It is possible to see and measure the impact of this project on the real lives of the small producers and the young people from the urban periphery of Cali who are now working in coffee production, and on the improvement of the quality of life of the families involved in the cooperatives. Perhaps not so obvious at first glance, is the formative impact of these interdisciplinary pre-professional internships with a clear social purpose, in which students from different degree courses have learned to work together for the common good and which have involved developing jointly with their professors forms of situated and engaged research, in order to identify the best methods for these small cooperatives to generate better work opportunities with greater care for the environment.

This is what we are referring to when we talk about new models of a well-integrated university, a University for the 21st century, capable of generating effective networks for the transformation of reality, a University that not only engages its students and profes-

sors, but also partners with local and national organisations in order to be able to develop these projects more effectively. In this way, a thicker, more supportive social fabric is woven for those who need it most.

In view of everything we have described, and the extraordinary dissemination it has had in the most diverse geographical areas, we could say that service-learning is now a global educational movement, and as a matter of fact, all five continents are represented at this symposium.

Trying to encompass the totality and diversity of the global landscape, it is necessary to recognise that the history of service-learning is much older than the term coined in 1968-69 in the United States. Long before it was given a name, the practice existed in many parts of the world, and has acquired various names in different languages and contexts.

We could provide a linear account of the history of service-learning in the United States, going from the Land-grant Universities to John Dewey, Freire's critical pedagogy, the civil movements and the formal emergence of service-learning, just as in Latin America or Asia we could write linear histories that would give us a relatively uniform picture of service-learning.

However, at *Uniservitate* we want to rescue the "polyhedral" diversity (EG, 236) of a world that acknowledges and values the diversity of facets that each region can bring, a representation that is not uniform, but can recognise the multiple cultural roots and the complexity of the history of service-learning.

Long before it was given a name, the practice existed in many parts of the world, and has acquired various names in different languages and contexts.

This polyhedral vision can take as foundations for reflection on service-learning the tradition of Confucius in China and the *fraternité* of the French Revolution, Gandhi's *Satyagraha* and African *Ubuntu* and *Harambee*, together with the *Sumak kawsay* ("the good life") of our Andean peoples in Latin America. In English we speak of "service, " and in Spanish we speak of "solidarity," a concept which in non-romance languages is sometimes difficult to translate, and we could go on with examples of the diversity of views on service-learning, a pedagogical innovation which in its practices can generate–despite conceptual differences–very similar practices in very different parts of the world.

Without going into details, I would like to emphasise that this symposium tries to bring all these notes together in a harmonious concert so that we can learn from each other about the history we have been making in our cultural context.

From this global view, we could present multiple definitions of service-learning. From a perspective close to the tradition of John Dewey, we could define it as "learning by doing for the common good"; from a vision close to Paulo Freire, we could define it as "reflection and action that transforms reality." We can define service-learning as a format of project-based or problem-based learning and as a format of participatory action research, but with the great difference that service-learning always requires three actors: the protagonism of the students, the accompanying role of professors and the co-protagonism of the community. Learning can occur based on projects, cases, problems or *by design* without leaving the classroom; participatory research can be carried out only between researchers and the community. However, for service-learning to occur we need students, professors and community to work together, we need to integrate teaching with research and participatory action.

In order to differentiate service-learning from other types of socially-oriented initiatives that may take place in HEIs, I felt it was important to refer to the "service-learning quadrants," a tool originally designed at Stanford University and which we have adapted, where the service axis shows us the quality of the service we offer to the community from lowest to highest, and the horizontal axis, the quality of learning, and thus these four quadrants are defined.

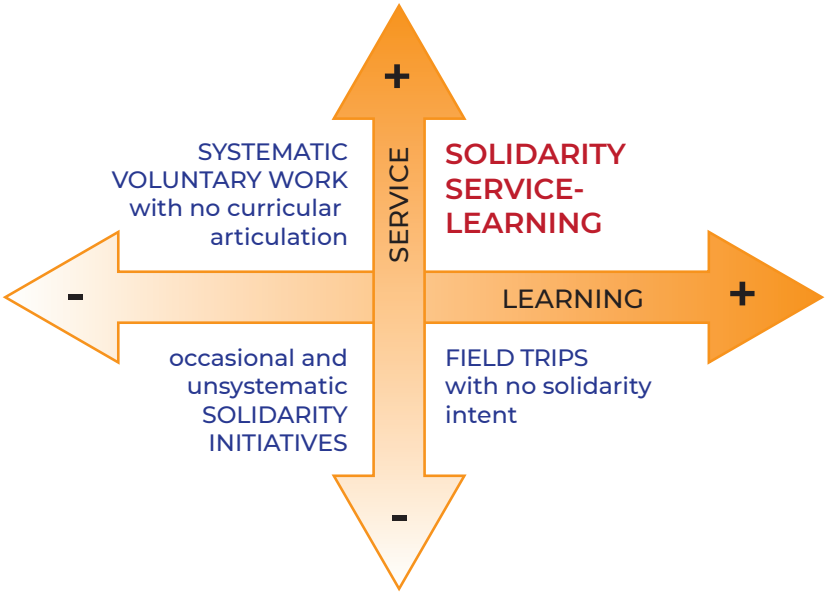

FIGURE 2: Service-learning quadrants (Tapia, 2006, based on Service-learning Center 2000, Stanford University. In: Ministry of Education, 1999)

To describe these four quadrants, I will use examples from different activities carried out at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). On the one hand, we have field trips that we do purely for learning purposes; for example, in this case, students from various Nat-

ural Science disciplines carry out research in a geo-forest park and monitor the state of the flora. It is above all a field trip, although in some way their research is contributing to a better knowledge and maintenance of this geo-forest park.

At the other lower quadrant, we find asystematic, occasional solidarity initiatives, which in Latin America are often called "campaigns." When Malaysia was hit by the tsunami, students went out with their professors to try to help alleviate its consequences, contributing to the cleaning of the devastated areas.

Since tsunamis occur more than once, the university decided to create a permanent volunteer corps that students could join so that they would be well prepared. In this kind of institutional volunteering experience, it does not matter whether you study medicine, architecture, social sciences or philosophy; what matters is that you are willing to step in and contribute. Surely, these activities are enormously formative from a personal perspective and in terms of higher value content, but they do not set out to develop intentional links with the specific educational content of a degree programme or to stimulate research in the context of the activity.

We speak of service-learning when, for example, medical students of ophthalmology participate in a national campaign to measure visual acuity and prescribe glasses for rural populations who do not have regular access to ophthalmic exams. In short, in service-learning practices, we have all the academic rigour of an internship and all the solidarity of voluntary service.

Sometimes, service-learning projects are clearly defined from the beginning, and sometimes they result from transitions that may involve adding connection with the educational content to what we have been doing through solidarity campaigns, pastoral work, student groups, or by applying the knowledge that we have to develop in our courses at the service of social needs.

I will briefly present an example from the Socio-Housing Services course, chaired by Prof. Daniela Gargantini, at the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Cordoba. This now compulsory course has contributed over 15 years to providing housing solutions for thousands of families on the periphery of the city and in rural areas, but it did not come into being overnight. It started–like many projects in Catholic universities with a missionary group. The volunteer architecture students, sensitised to the precariousness of housing, proposed offering an optional course to study the housing problem and provide a service to these populations on the periphery. During a process of curriculum reform, it was the students who asked for this course to become compulsory, because they realised

that they were not only learning theory and making fictitious plans, but that they were doing real, meaningful on-the-ground practice, and that they were also learning to communicate with their "clients" and with a wide range of community actors. They realised that they could develop processes of situated research, well rooted in the field and the project, in dialogue with neighbours to be able to define what had to be built, what had to be improved, how to do it, and what the best alternative was. In this way–as the students themselves said–they acquired a kind of professional experience as architects that no other course had given them. Among many other projects they carried out, a few years ago the students of the course contributed to a neighbourhood organisation being able to have the correct plans and all the requirements demanded by the Inter-American Development Bank to apply for funding for the construction of a neighbourhood that allowed many families to move from precarious housing to decent housing. As in this case, the best projects often arise from processes of great personal perseverance and institutional continuity.

However, to be realistic we have to say that not all service-learning projects are that good and not all are the same. There are often transitions from projects with a little bit of learning and a little bit of service to projects in which there is perhaps more learning than service or vice versa, until we finally reach the maturity of quality service-learning projects in which both academic excellence and social engagement are balanced and are equal in meaning and quality.

In short, and beyond the very diverse definitions and conceptualisations around the world, we can recognise three fundamental components of quality service-learning:

- *Solidarity service*: intended to meet real and felt needs in a delimited and effective way, *with* a community and not only *for* it. We will come back to why we add "solidarity" to service.
- *Active student protagonism* from planning to evaluation. Some professors prefer to design the project on their own or in agreement with a social organisation, and present the project already defined to the students. These projects may work, even be effective, but they hardly have the formative impact of a project in which students are able to deploy their creativity, initiative, and learn to manage, make decisions and respond to the ever-changing challenges of reality.
- *Planning of learning content connected to the solidarity activity*. What differentiates other forms of voluntary service from service-learning is that we educators know what comes to us from the community's needs and the students' creativity, but we also know what can be learned while addressing

> those needs in terms of educational contents, the curriculum, and the formation of the professional profile. We also accompany the reflection on the practice, something that is fundamental, so that these are not naive practices, and through classroom and field activities we accompany the project as a platform for the development of competences for citizenship, for work, and also for the development of relevant research activities (Tapia, 2018)).

In Spanish, we always add the word "solidarity" to the original English word for service-learning because we want to point out that service in these projects that claim to be formative should not be just any form of service.

To put it briefly, when we speak of "solidarity" we want to distinguish charity–which has a vertical sense of aid, and which can sometimes very easily fall into paternalism–from authentic solidarity. Authentic solidarity has more to do with sharing and acknowledging the value of fraternity, which the Pope emphasises in *Fratelli tutti* and which secular universities recognise in the principles of the French Revolution, a fraternity that takes the perspective of the recognition of rights, in the search for equity and justice, as shown in the table below:

VERTICAL CHARITY	**HORIZONTAL SOLIDARITY**
Give - Help	Share - Reciprocity
Doing "for"	Doing "with," co-protagonism
Paternalism	Fraternity
Clientelism	Empowerment
"We already know everything"	Exchange and of knowledge
"It makes me feel good"	Empathy, prosocial bonding
Reproduce situations of injustice	Recognise rights, search for equality and justice

TABLE 1: Vertical charity and horizontal solidarity

We know that a university that takes its social mission seriously and practices genuine solidarity can generate very significant transformations in its surroundings, contribute to the care of the environment, to local health conditions, to the development of marginalised communities and have many other positive impacts on reality.

Less visible, even sometimes to the protagonists themselves, is the impact that solidarity activities can have on academic excellence. The students quoted at the beginning

of this talk reminded us that excellence can be an end in itself, something that keeps us worrying over rankings and certifications, or it can be seen as a means to achieve the social mission of serving people.

The truth is that it takes much more learning to solve a real problem than to pass an exam with the minimum mark. We need to learn much more to transform reality than to diagnose and describe it, which is what we often find easier to do.

I am not going to dwell on this topic, which has been studied for decades, because there is a great amount of evidence from research on how service-learning has a positive impact on students. I would simply like to point out the close relationship between the pedagogy of service-learning and those four "pillars of education for the 21st century" defined by UNESCO in the famous *Delors Report*: learning to learn, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

These pillars can also be expressed in the old words of Pestalozzi that Pope Francis often quotes nowadays: it is a matter of combining "the language of the head, the heart and the hands." The traditional university of the 19th century was a university of the head and sometimes it seems that, now that new sensibilities and empathy are so popular, we would be left only with the heart. Conversely, integral education, comprehensive learning, the education that the 21st century calls for, is an education that combines the head, the heart and the hands. This is exactly what the research evidence says that service-learning projects bring about (Billig, 2004).

Moving on to the last part of my presentation, I would like to point out that *Uniservitate* intends not only to multiply service-learning projects, but also to multiply the institutional policies that promote this pedagogical approach, the processes of institutionalisation of service-learning as part of the identity of our institutions.

We know that in these processes of institutionalisation, institutional policy decisions are necessary, and they must come from the authorities, "from above." We also know that normally service-learning practices grow from the bottom up, from a few "crazy" and enthusiastic people who, through their experiences–even small ones–generate a critical mass of engaged professors and students, a network of alliances with the environment. It is in the convergence of institutional decisions and the drive of the critical mass that the best institutional policies emerge.

What is the difference between a service-learning project and a service-learning institutional programme? Basically, it is not only sustained by the good will of a professor or

a group of students, but it becomes formally part of the "normality" of teaching and research in a college or university.

Just to give an example, I will refer to the School of Veterinary Medicine at the Catholic University of Temuco in southern Chile, which has developed several institutional service-learning programmes. One of them began by addressing a public health problem in the city, which was the proliferation of stray dogs and other domestic animals in the streets. An alliance was established with the municipal authorities, and based on the first projects, an institutional curriculum was developed in which the treatment of animal welfare, the issue of endangered animals and the problems this caused for public health, were included through different courses throughout the degree programme. First-year students begin with the simplest projects, collaborating in the hygiene of animals in the municipal pet shelter; second-year students take bacterial and fungal culture samples, and so on until they reach the pre-professional practices of the final years with surgery, health care in the consulting room and also with the writing of theses in the area of Public Health and Small Animal Veterinary Medicine.

It is in the convergence of institutional decisions and the drive of the critical mass that the best institutional policies emerge.

So far we have addressed the question of the social mission of Higher Education and the pedagogy of service-learning from a universal point of view.

In the framework of *Uniservitate*, I would like to underline that this is particularly important for the identity and mission of a Catholic university.

The Catholic universities that are participating in this symposium will recall that the Second Vatican Council, in *Gravissimus Educationis* already spoke of the Social Responsibility of Higher Education (GE, 10), and since then numerous Vatican documents have called for the social responsibility and engagement of the CHEIs, from John Paul II's Ex Corde Ecclesiae (7, 32, 34) to the most recent messages of Pope Francis to Catholic universities in various parts of the world.

I would like to quote here just a small part of that magisterium, a phrase of Pope Francis to the educators gathered at the Catholic University of Ecuador:

> Do you watch over your students, helping them to develop a critical sense, an open mind capable of caring for today's world? A spirit capable of seeking new answers to the varied chal-

> lenges that society sets before humanity today? Are you able to encourage them not to disregard the world around them, what is happening all over? Can you encourage them to do that? To make that possible, you need to take them outside the university lecture hall; their minds need to leave the classroom, their hearts must go out of the classroom.
> Does our life, with its uncertainties, its mysteries and its questions, find a place in the university curriculum or different academic activities? (Pope Francis, 2015).

Service-learning practices can not only integrate the pillars of Teaching, Research and Extension or help bridge the gap between theory and practice, but in the framework of a CHEI they can also help to develop an authentically integral education, to bond faith and life, and to nurture a spirituality open to all beliefs centred on concrete love for the most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

In *Uniservitate* we want to explore the spiritual dimension of service-learning, which involves not only the religious dimension. I will not elaborate on this topic here since it will be discussed in other parts of this book.

I would like to finish by going back to Richard Brosse's opening remarks regarding the pandemic in which we are immersed. As the great Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti said, "When we thought we had all the answers, suddenly all the questions changed." We thought we knew how to do it, and then the coronavirus struck and we wondered if it was still possible to do service-learning. We posted a map on our CLAYSS website inviting those who were doing service-learning during the pandemic to mark it on the map, and we have been happy to see that experiences have been multiplying everywhere. I invite all those who are listening to us to join us if they are carrying out service-learning projects, because our aim is to show that it is possible to continue doing voluntary service, to continue campaigning and to continue doing service-learning even in times of pandemic.

Service-learning practices can not only integrate the pillars of Teaching, Research and Extension or help bridge the gap between theory and practice, but in the framework of a CHEI they can also help to develop an authentically integral education, to bond faith and life, and to nurture a spirituality open to all beliefs centred on concrete love for the most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

In these times of non-stop virtuality, for Gerontology students at the Singapore University of Social Sciences the pandemic meant that the on-site physical activity classes for the elderly they had been

doing had to be moved to a virtual format. In order to continue to nurture the bond with the elderly, who live alone and are one of the higher-risk populations in Singapore, the students had to develop the "digital literacy for virtual platforms use" project, which would give the elderly basic tools not only to connect to their fitness class, but to stay safe, in touch with their families, and able to navigate the digital world.

Virtual service-learning experiences have multiplied during the pandemic, but hybrid or combined forms and onsite projects are also being developed.

I would like to pay special tribute to all those students from all parts of the world who are also leaving their houses and going out with due caution but putting their own bodies on the lines to serve their brothers and sisters in these very difficult times. Universities have been quick to develop coherent institutional policies aimed at protecting us by having empty classrooms and moving to virtuality while also developing the social mission: reorienting research to what we need to know in the face of the pandemic, opening empty classrooms as shelters for containment and isolation. My tribute goes to universities and, above all, to those who are doing service-learning even in the most challenging conditions.

I hope that many universities will find in the pandemic the call to generate engaged institutional policies. I hope that we can all start to think about the day after, that we can harness all that we have learned and suffered in these trying times that are not over yet, and that we can generate better educational practices, better and safer service-learning projects and better institutional policies.

I once heard one of the pioneers of service-learning in the United States say that they wanted to change the world and universities had turned it into a way of changing pedagogy. I think there is no contradiction between those two things because, as Pope Francis says, "we will not change the world if we do not change education" (2015b) and with service-learning we are certain that we can do both at the same time.

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Links of interest and complementary contents:

https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/nieves_tapia_symposium.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UXdhX8c0WI

GLOBAL COMPACT ON EDUCATION

In support of the Global Compact on Education

Uniservitate is a global programme for the promotion of service-learning in Catholic Higher Education. It aims to generate a systemic change in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs), through the institutionalisation of service-learning (SL) as a tool to achieve its mission of an integral education and formation of agents of change committed to their community.

UNISERVITATE COLLECTION

"Only by changing education can we change the world"

Pope Francis

1
I Global Symposium UNISERVITATE

This first volume of the Uniservitate Collection is dedicated to the I Global Symposium Uniservitate, whose objective was to initiate a series of meetings within the framework of the Uniservitate programme, as a multicultural, global and plural space, based on the contributions of the pedagogical proposal of service-learning to integral university education. The event, held in October 2020, sought to facilitate the exchange between experts, authorities and professors from Higher Education Institutions from diverse cultural contexts around the world, on university community engagement and service-learning practices and programmes. The present Proceedings are a compilation of the reflections and experiences shared there.

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