



European Observatory
of Service-Learning
in Higher Education

2020 Annual Report



Learn to engage · Engage to learn



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Asociación de Aprendizaje-Servicio Universitario (ApSU)
European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education
www.eoslhe.eu – contact@eoslhe.eu

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Pilar Aramburuzabala

President of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE)

Director of the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE)

Coordinator of the Service-Learning Unit of CIVIS, a European Civic University (CIVIS) – Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM)

We are proud to present the second Annual Report of EOSLHE. It is a record of 2020, a year full of challenges and opportunities.

For Service-Learning this year has also been an opportunity. S-L has gained much visibility and has demonstrated its necessity. In the academic institutions we have had the opportunity to restructure projects, research, and teaching to adapt them to the COVID-19 situation.

The European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE) has also faced these challenges by making an extra effort to reach out to Service-Learning in Europe and to support other related organizations. At the same time EOSLHE, as a platform for digital dissemination of knowledge, has continued working hard to offer its services and expand Service-Learning.

Pilar Aramburuzabala

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing and disseminating knowledge on Service-Learning in European Higher Education

In its two years of existence, the Observatory has undertaken numerous activities, created a variety of contents and disseminated information related to Service-Learning (S-L from here on) in European tertiary education. S-L is an increasingly well-known phenomenon around the globe; an educational approach that has proven its ability to create positive effects for both society and students' learning. The 2020 EOSLHE annual report has been prepared by the Observatory's team, EASLHE members, and other collaborators.

The EOSLHE Annual Report contains:

- 1) EOSLHE achievements in 2020
- 2) Responses of Service-Learning to COVID-19
- 3) Networks related to Service-Learning in Europe
- 4) Active European projects

Background of the European Observatory

The Observatory was launched in 2019 after a long period of gestation leading up to its creation, including the effort of many people to become what it is today. EOSLHE was set up by the Spanish Association of S-L in Higher Education (Asociación de Aprendizaje -Servicio Universitario, 2019) with the collaboration and mutual support of European partners, professionals and experts in S-L. The observatory came into being as a project of the Spanish association because the European network was not a legal entity at that time. At present, EOSLHE is in the process of transitioning from the Spanish association to becoming a project of the European association.

The Observatory was launched in January 2019 and subsequently contributed to the creation of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE). EASLHE was finally launched in September 2019 during the 2nd European Conference of Service-Learning in Higher Education in Antwerp, Belgium.



Service-Learning is an experiential educational method in which students engage in activities that address real human, social and environmental needs, thereby contributing to the achievement of the UN SDGs, by integrating community service into the curriculum to enrich learning at all levels, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities through critical reflection. It brings together students, academics and the community, allowing them all to become teaching resources, problem solvers and partners. The main objective of EOSLHE is to promote and disseminate the knowledge of S-L in European Higher Education as an educational approach that enhances students' civic engagement and brings them closer to a range of social realities while enabling them to work in a real environment. To achieve these objectives in 2020, EOSLHE launched a number of initiatives.

CHAPTER 1: THE OBSERVATORY'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

Marta Alonso & Ana Cayuela

EOSLHE's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The most outstanding occurrence of 2020 was at the beginning of the year. The eruption of COVID-19 pandemic notably has changed our lives. We are still trying to imagine how far its multiple long-term effects will take us. The coronavirus has transformed all aspects of society, including education and not-for-profit sectors. Both areas are fundamental pillars of S-L and therefore very important for the Observatory, which has therefore faced a serious challenge. At the outbreak of the pandemic the high level of uncertainty affected S-L, and EOSLHE had to respond not only to the disruption of its regular activities, through the cancelation of national and international meetings and the closure of offices, but also to the interruption of S-L activities across Europe.



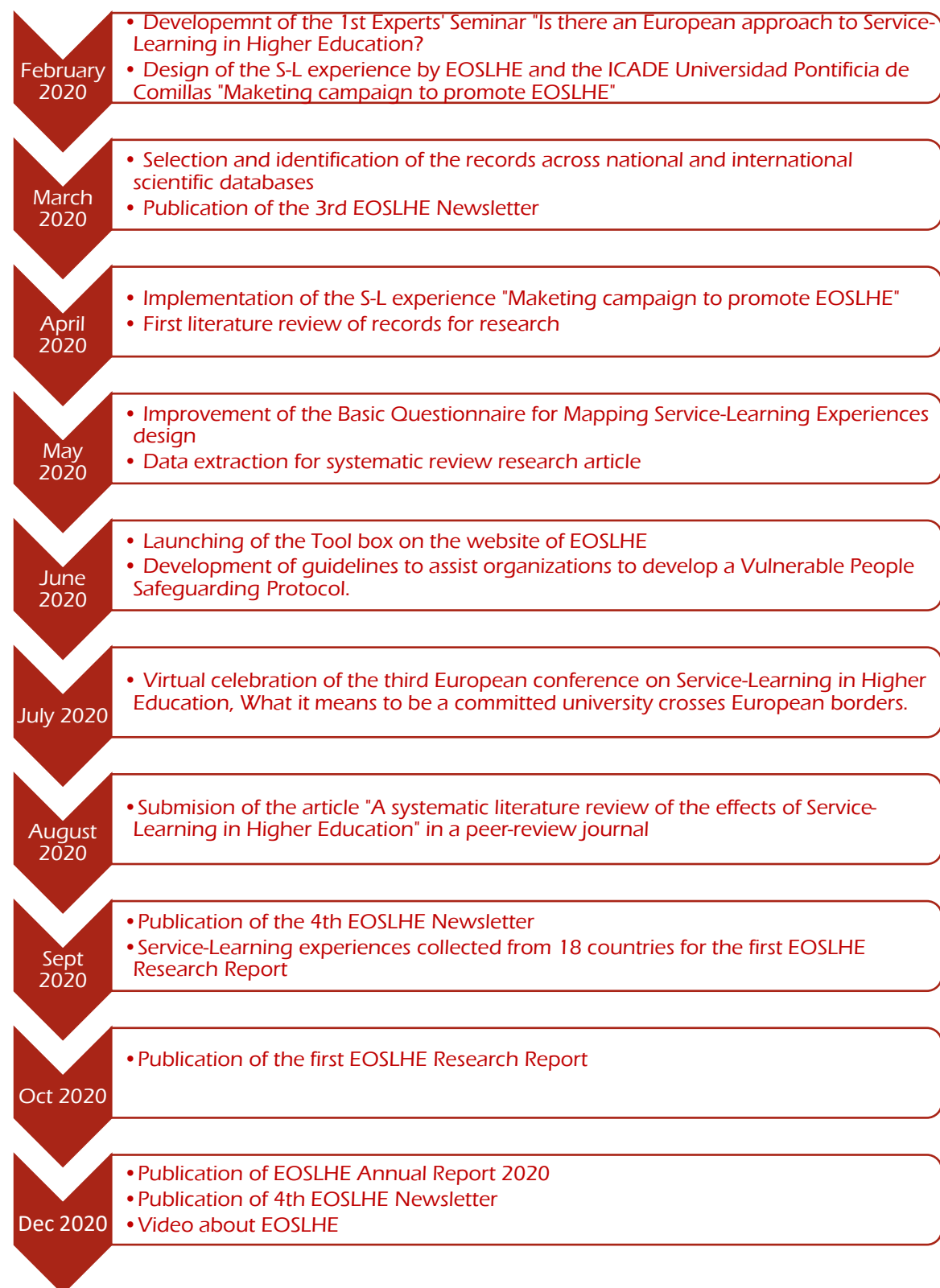
"Covid-19-Breaking-bubbles-01.gif" "Wikimedia Commons" is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Populations that were already vulnerable before the pandemic saw their situation aggravated. In addition, the situation of many families worsened seriously due to multiple factors stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. Some prevention measures have resulted in increased poverty risk factors such as job losses, lockdowns affecting interaction among families, neighbours and community partners, or simply being a population at risk of severe COVID-19 due to previous morbidity. All these factors are leading to the emergence of new community needs.

At this crucial time, EASLHE has published a *Practical guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19* to support the adaptation of S-L courses to the new reality (EASLHE, 2020). Moreover, S-L is proving more necessary than ever due to new needs emerging in the communities. The Observatory continues to be a key space for cooperation and exchange for promoting and facilitating the use of this methodology in addition to its institutionalization across Europe.

EOSLHE's activities for the achievement of its goals during the year 2020



A virtual platform to share

The EOSLHE website is a key platform for sharing, enhancing and disseminating knowledge on S-L in tertiary education. It collects and disseminates evidence of S-L methodology. Prior to its publication, information is reviewed. Data sources and publications are verified by the EOSLHE Core Team and Academic Committee. Despite all the difficulties of the year 2020, EOSLHE has produced newsletters, reports, blogs, a toolbox and the interactive map compiling S-L experiences.



Expert meetings on Service-Learning in Higher Education

In collaboration with specialists from around the world, EOSLHE organized two important experts' seminars, one face-to-face at the beginning of the year, and a second one virtually in the middle of the year.



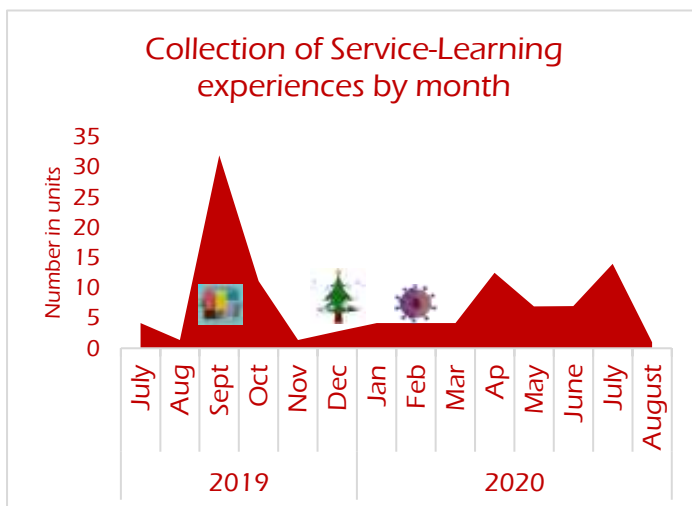
The first meeting was a fruitful debate held in Madrid in February 2020. The results were disseminated through the 3rd EOSLHE Newsletter, titled "Is there a European approach to Service-Learning in Higher Education?" The Newsletter also covered the higher education system of several European countries.

The second was a virtual meeting within the third European conference on Service-Learning in Higher Education in July 2020. At this event, EOSLHE collaborated with the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE) in a workshop titled “Setting a Global Research Agenda for Service-Learning and Community Engagement”. The meeting was the main contents of the 4th Newsletter of the Observatory.



Mapping European Service-Learning experiences

As mentioned above, one of EOSLHE’s core activities has been to develop an interactive map of Europe, freely available on the website. For this purpose an S-L experience was defined as a description of a specific S-L practice taking place during one semester or academic year, in which participating students shared common service and learning goals and evaluation activities. Several S-L experiences may occur at the same time and within the same classroom, grade, or subject.



Methodological considerations were described in detail in the EOSLHE Research Report (EOSLHE, 2020b). It is important to note that face-to-face restrictions and multiple conference cancelations have affected the compilation of experiences, despite it being a website survey system.

A sample of 82 S-L experiences

One of the main achievements of EOSLHE has been the mapping of 82 S-L experiences (data from July 2019 to September 2020) in various countries.

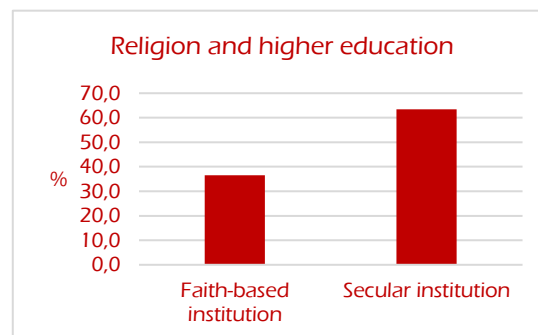
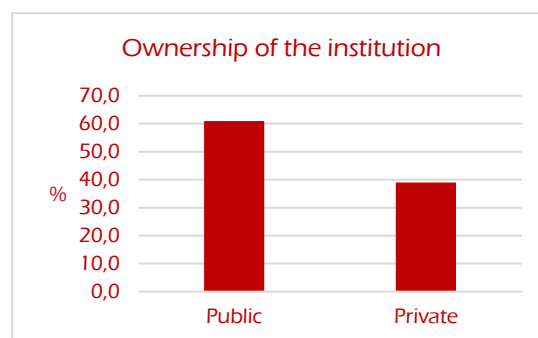
S-L in higher education is carried out in at least 18 European countries

- Albania
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Finland
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Lithuania
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom

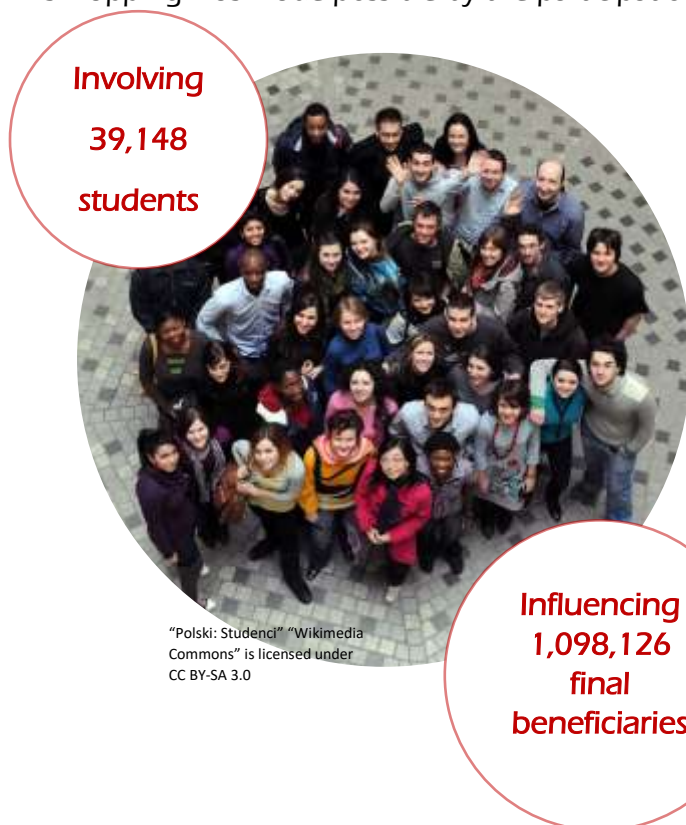


S-L was performed by 56 higher education institutions

of which 86.6% were universities
more than a half were public
and more than a half were secular



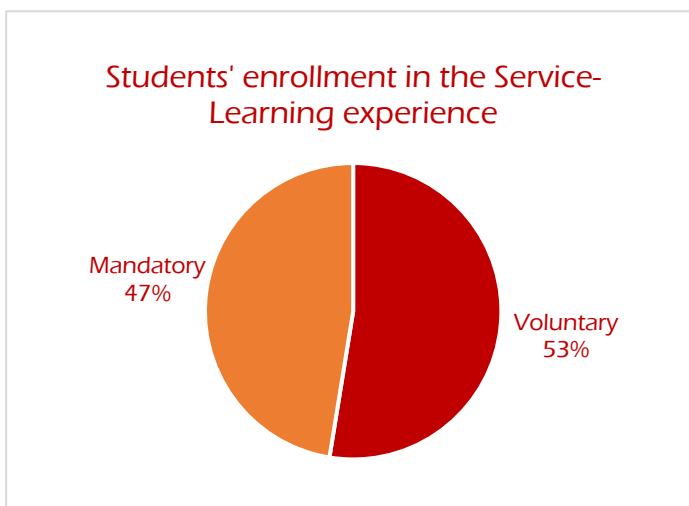
This mapping was made possible by the participation of people related to S-L independently



of their position or title, mainly academic staff in charge of S-L experiences. The vast majority, 81.3%, reported that their institution had provided support with the design, implementation, or evaluation of the S-L experience. 77.5 % were sure that their project would be implemented the next year. These high percentages led us to conclude that these experiences were ongoing projects and therefore stable.

EOSLHE has also built a general picture of the way in which S-L

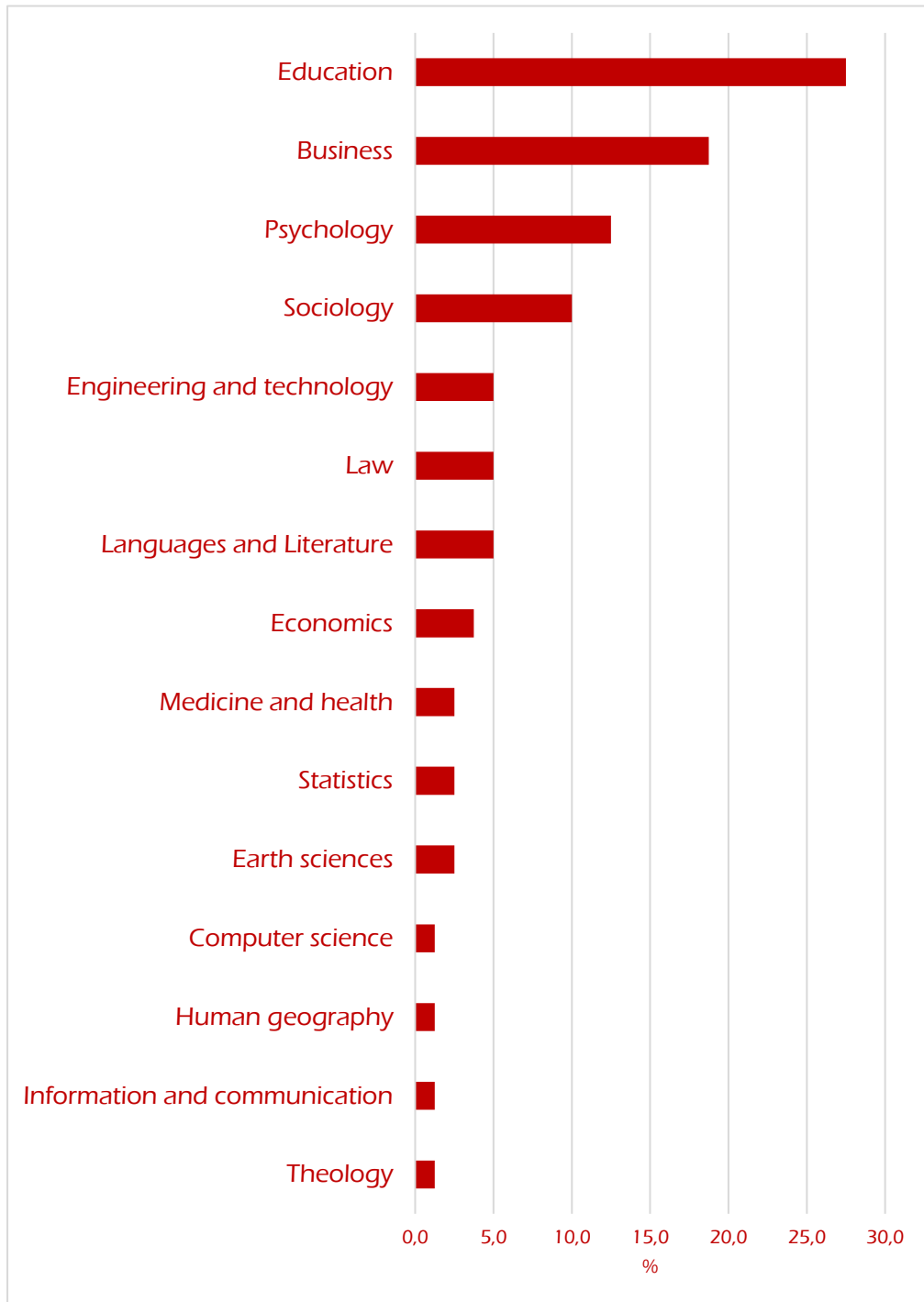
has been carried out in European tertiary education. Regarding the interaction of students with the community, 55.6% of this was face-to-face, followed by 35.8% blended with virtual. The vast majority of projects were performed in undergraduate degrees (84.1%), and only four experiences were linked to Ph.D., master's or postgraduate degrees. None were exclusively associated with a Ph.D. programme.



Similar numbers of S-L experiences were integrated into curricular subjects in any degree or in the form of specific S-L courses.

Social Sciences are the main academic field.

Disciplines of the Service-Learning experiences in higher education



"English teacher.jpg" "Wikimedia Commons" is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



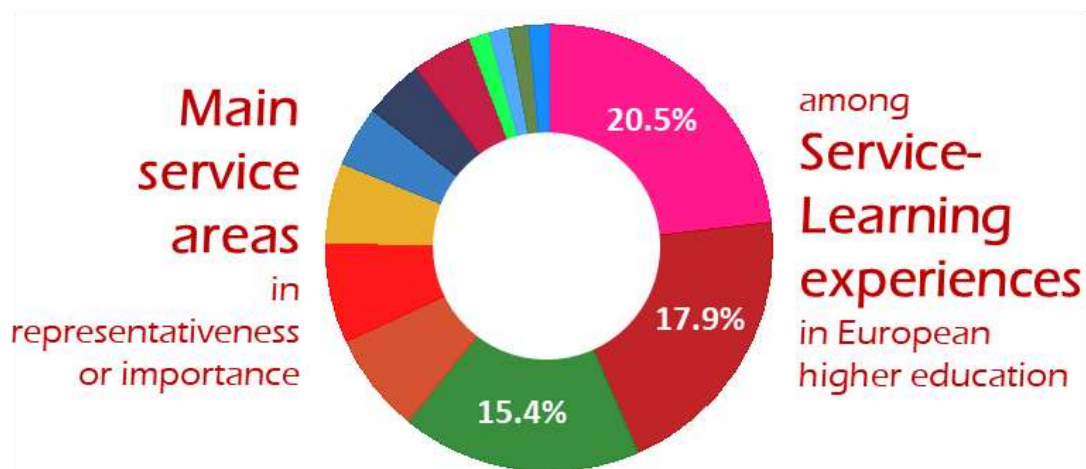
"Starting Online Business.jpg" "Wikimedia Commons" is licensed under
















"Symbol for Psychology & Law Blue.png" "Wikimedia Commons" is licensed under CC0 3.0 Universal (CC0 3.0) Public Domain Dedication

S-L contributes to meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In our sample, the main service areas related to the SDGs in representativeness or importance were: reduced inequalities, quality education and good health and well-being.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



	Reducing inequalities		Quality education
	Good health and well-being		Gender equality
	No poverty		Sustainable cities and communities
	Peace, justice and strong institutions		Partnership for the goals
	Decent work and economic growth		Life on land
	Clear water and sanitation		Climate action
	Life below water		

CHAPTER 2: THE RESPONSE OF SERVICE-LEARNING TO THE COVID-19

EOSLHE has collected a number of good practices from different countries that explain how S-L has responded to the coronavirus.

EducamosContigo

Marta Alonso

Your university serving the community. From volunteering to Service-Learning

At the Autonomous University of Madrid, a team of students, teachers, and professionals have come together to offer free psychoeducational support and resources to families, teachers and students affected by the crisis caused by COVID-19.

The students have learned an enormous amount from this experience, and as a result it was decided that in the next academic year, 2020-2021, the initiative would be turned into a service-learning project so that it could be included in their curriculum and recognized with ECTS credits.



Creado por freepick

The project aims to respond to the psychoeducational needs of students, families and teachers at all pre-university educational levels by promoting accessible and inclusive education.

Who can benefit from this service?

Families: organizing routines, balancing family life with working from home, emotional management and support in communication with the school.





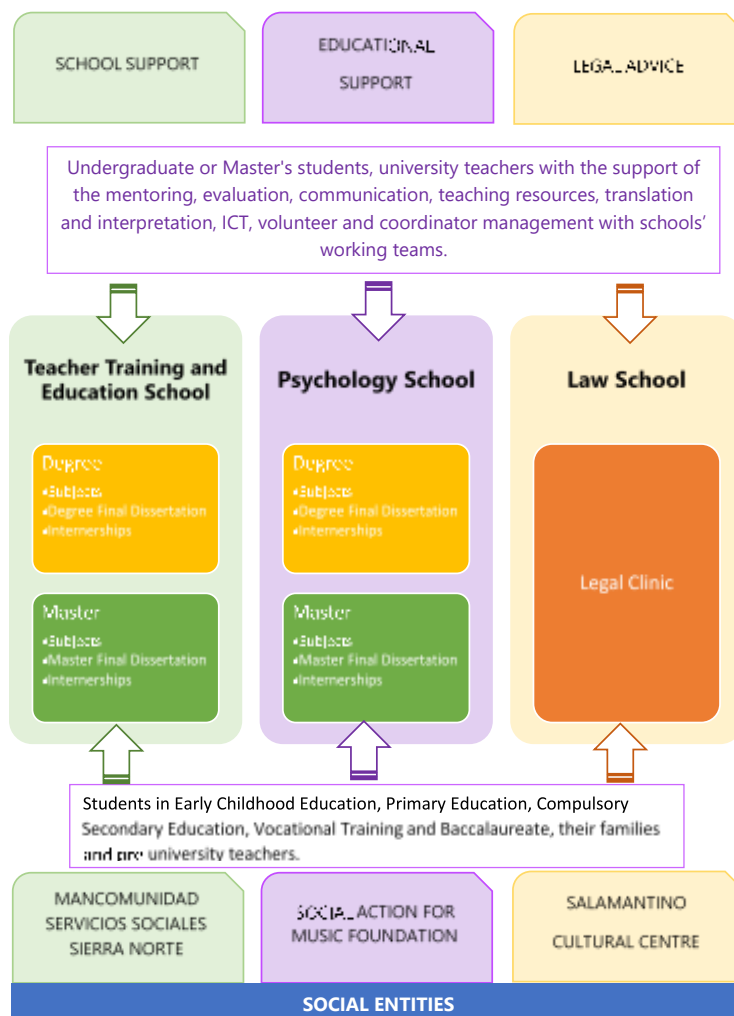
Students: organizing of routines and homework planning, learning strategies, emotional management, accompaniment and/or school reinforcement for students at all mandatory and non-compulsory educational stages in subjects where they may require support.

Teachers: organizing and planning core contents, adjusting teaching methodologies to virtual platforms, adapting educational responses to student diversity and mastering online evaluation.



How can you get involved?

University teachers will be able to add to this program and present it to their students as part of the work of a module, master's degree final dissertation or undergraduate degree final dissertation, in some cases combined with internships*; thus, it will be evaluated and awarded credits in the same way as any other subject.



How does it work?

The initiative has been divided among the following working teams:

- Psychoeducational Accompaniment Team:
This accompanies two pre-university school students one hour a week during the whole semester, starting in October (24 hours of support + 24 hours of session preparation).
- School Accompaniment Team:
This accompanies two pre-university school students one hour a week during the whole semester, starting in October (24 hours of support + 24 hours of session preparation).
- Resource selection team for teachers, families and students:
This assists selection and/or development of inclusive educational resources that may be useful to teachers and students or their families. Also for specific demands such as those related to ICT methodologies (48 hours of work).
- Communication Team (Social Networks):
This provides support in developing quality content related to education and the situation that we are experiencing for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter (48 hours of work).
- EducamosContigo Evaluation Team (graduate students only):
For students interested in research and evaluation of the quality and social impact of the project.
- Translation and Interpretation Team (Chinese, Arabic, Romanian and English):
Psychoeducational support and school accompaniment teams for families or students requesting help with language when Spanish is not their mother tongue.
- Mentoring Team:
Teachers specialized in different subjects available to Autonomous University students and volunteers to answer any questions arising during accompaniment.

Start date: October 2020

Ears to the Soul Volunteer Programme at Matej Bel University

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

In cooperation with a regional volunteer centre, the Department of Social work at the Faculty of Education, Matej Bel University, Slovakia, launched the Ears to the Soul Volunteer Programme in May 2020: a telephone helpline for lonely people. The programme was built around service-learning principles and was created in response to the current situation caused by the spread of coronavirus, in which we encounter both increased stress and a feeling of helplessness due to current events, but also an increasing sense of loneliness and social isolation. In this situation elderly people in particular have limited social contacts because of the risk of infection when meeting their loved ones, friends, neighbours, etc. The service aim of this programme was to help people overcome the feeling of social isolation, maintain social contact with other people and share their feelings. The programme was primarily aimed at the target group of lonely people who felt isolated and needed to make contact with another person (mainly senior citizens, but also people in at-risk groups such as patients with chronic and oncological diseases and people with cardiovascular and respiratory problems). The programme adopted a one-on-one form in which volunteer-lonely person pairs were created, thereby guaranteeing an individual approach, better mutual knowledge and consideration of the person in need. The volunteer telephoned a specific person regularly (three times a week). We offered social work students the opportunity to complete the programme as an alternative to a professional internship, which they could not undertake during the summer semester. The educational goal of the programme was to develop communication competencies with the client, empathy and personal and social responsibility. These represent some of the essential competencies for a social work graduate.



After recruitment, students were selected for the programme on the basis of a completed registration form and an introductory interview. On completing the interview, they participated in online training. After undertaking the training, client-student pairs were gradually created. The main task of the students was to be in telephone contact with a lonely person, preferably three times a week, with the contact always initiated by the student. Students filled out a record of the calls they had made every week. These also included a brief reflection on and evaluation of contacts with clients. Each student was assigned a tutor who was a lecturer from the Department of Social Work. The programme also included mandatory group supervision aimed at reflecting on the experience of the relationship with the client and problematic situations. Working in the programme was set for a period of three months from the training course. In the final phase of the programme, students attended the last online

supervisory group meeting. Their task was also to close the cooperation with the clients, to fill in the final written self-reflection and the evaluation questionnaire. Evaluation interviews were also conducted with clients after the end of the period of cooperation.

From May to July 2020, a total of 12 social work students took part in the programme. Fourteen clients showed interest in it, out of which 12 people were finally involved. The students made a total of 4,178 minutes of calls, with an average of 348 minutes per student. In terms of hours, the programme did not meet the prescribed number for completing professional practice in social work in the field or facility, but nevertheless, the evaluation proved that it had fulfilled the required educational and service goals.

Teach project [Proyecto enseña]

Domingo Alfonso Martin Sanchez

The "Teach Project", in which a group of students coordinated by several teachers help high school students with subjects such as Physics, Chemistry or Mathematics (STEM), was created by the Unit on Social Entrepreneurship, Ethics and Values in Engineering in the School of Mining and Energy Engineering at the Technical University of Madrid (UPM).

This project forms part of the UPM curriculum and is recognized with ECTS credits.¹ It enables students at the University to develop cross-curricular skills such as the ability to convey knowledge, empathy with students from different backgrounds, oral and written communication skills and personal and social responsibility.

The project has gained importance this year due to the crisis caused by Covid-19, as many high school students have had problems continuing with their classes, which means that they have had greater difficulty understanding those subjects. As a number of teachers have stated, this has widened the gap between those students who were able to receive help both from family members and private teachers, allowing them to master those subjects, and those could not rely on that help or could not have access to private tutoring because they lacked the means to do so.

The project aims to achieve the following Sustainable Development Goals: 4, quality education; 5, gender equality; 10, reduce inequalities; and 17, partnerships for the goals.



Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP)

The project meets the needs of pre-university students in order to promote quality education for everyone.

Who can benefit from this experience?

The families who cannot offer their children help in those subjects.

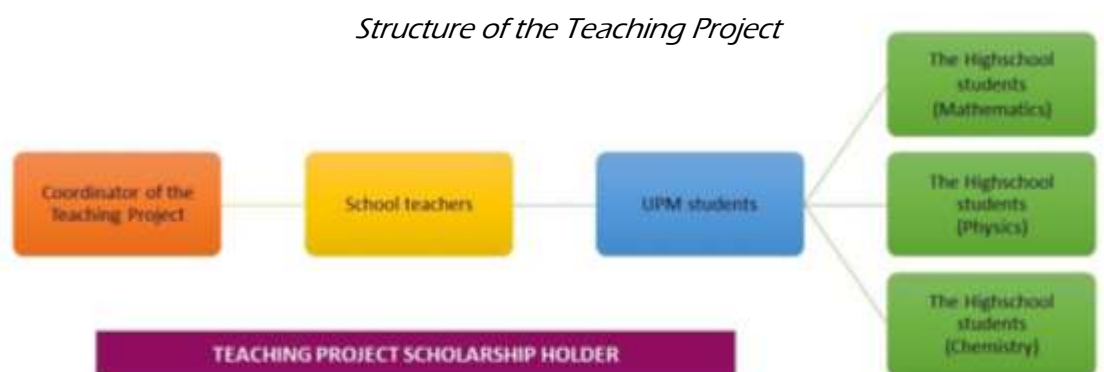
The high-school students who receive help in those subjects will be provided with explanations from another point of view, stressing the importance of understanding the subjects in a more dynamic way.

The university students acting as teachers will learn to organise and plan their work, lead a class by managing the time they spend on each part that students need to reinforce, and improve their communication skills.

How can you take part in the project?

All university students can take part in the project regardless of the year they are in. This activity is recognized with 2 ECTS of educational activities common to all degrees at the University.

How does it work?



The project is organized into working groups.

- Coordinator of the activity
- Teaching Project Scholarship Holder, who serves as a link between the high-school teachers and the UPM students.
- UPM students who are interested in improving their cross-curricular skills by helping pre-university students with limited resources to get quality education.
- School teachers, who will provide UPM students with the material they are teaching in class to help them plan the lessons.

For more information, please visit: <https://blogs.upm.es/actividadesacreditables/proyecto-ensena-s20750/>

De Montfort University's response to Covid-19

Mark Charlton

De Montfort University, in Leicester, United Kingdom, has made great strides in developing its service-learning activities, despite the impacts of the Covid-19. As well as mapping existing practices at the institution, new opportunities have been developed to deliver community-based learning for mutual benefit in the coming academic year, seeking to support long-term civic recovery from the pandemic.

A collaboration between the university's Social Impact and Engagement directorate, DMU's Education for Sustainable Development team and the Centre for Academic Innovation has investigated the scale of service-learning already underway across the university's four faculties in order to capture the extent of existing activity, support its delivery and encourage others to adapt or change modules to allow students to learn together with wider society.

Concurrently to this, the university has been developing new service-learning opportunities for teaching to meet the needs of charities and organisations working with the city communities most affected by the Covid-19 crisis. This work has allowed the public engagement team to begin to match the city's needs with students who can provide volunteering, research or knowledge mobilisation to support these groups.

A key focus of this work has been to apply the targets and indicators of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for impact, which has engaged both staff and students in the idea of undertaking projects that support those most in need and, in some cases, in creating novel solutions to long-standing problems.

Initial mapping of courses with a service-learning offer at De Montfort University (DMU) has found 54 members of staff actively delivering community-based learning activities so far. The DMU service-learning project team has used this as the basis for further research and to seek more existing practice. The university is currently in the process of further promoting service-learning and its definition to teaching staff to allow more teachers to engage with the idea, receive additional support and develop a community of practice to share experiences.

The challenges of Covid-19 have meant a significant adjustment in how existing service-learning is delivered and have presented an opportunity to frame activities that support communities in this challenging time, while enhancing student learning. The concept of service-learning is still relatively new in the UK Higher Education sector and the use of community-based learning approaches is now seen as an emerging field. De Montfort University has been working closely with a handful of universities nationally, including King's College London, Nottingham Trent University and University College London, to develop a practitioner network to share best practice and push the agenda forward at a national level.

An improbable (but effective) Service-Learning project in the time of Covid-19

Carlos Prieto Dávila & Lucía Vallecillo Graziatti

Eight years ago, Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid launched a Service-Learning oriented program for its students. Comillas Solidaria, the group in charge of promoting social engagement among students, set up a successful partnership with various faculties and schools and, through the years, a number of programs were created: the Legal Clinic (Law), the Social Business Guidance Unit (Business), the ICAI Social Lab (Engineering) and the Centre for Social Impact (Human and Social Sciences). Every year hundreds of students were involved in demanding and truly educational projects, receiving not only training but also personal and professional guidance, and committing themselves to finding solutions to the needs previously identified by our social partners. Further, dozens of teaching staff willingly received training in Service-Learning and started using it – and, finally, a Service-Learning module was created, compulsory for every undergraduate student. It was in February 2020, with almost one thousand Comillas students participating in Service-Learning projects, that the pandemic arrived. What could be done? The first response was to adapt the existing projects to the new conditions. Since these projects already had a considerable track record and thanks to virtual communication tools, this was carried out successfully.

Immediately afterwards, two new challenges had to be confronted. First, we were aware that our students needed new tools for understanding, analysing and handling the new scenario –not only technological tools but also those related to social skills, amongst others. At short notice we were able to set up a three-week online course: #BeReady. Around 120 students took part in this.

Secondly, we had to decide whether Service-Learning projects were viable for 2020/2021 if the situation did not change and, if so, how we were to design them in order to guarantee a true learning process, a true service and a significant and meaningful experience for everyone involved, particularly our students. The challenge was huge: the Human and Social Sciences Faculty was about to launch its own Service-Learning module for students in International Relations, Global Communications, Translation and Interpretation, Education, Psychology, Social Work, Philosophy, and so on: and this meant more than 300 new students and important projects for all of them.

Service-Learning proved not to be part of the problem but of the solution, and we found that new projects could be launched. Some of them needed to be adapted to the context of the pandemic, while others were even designed to *intervene around its social consequences*. In both cases, creative thinking, strong bonds with our social partners and flexibility were vital ingredients.

Several of these experiences could be described here, but let us take a current example. As we mentioned above, the health crisis has coincided with the implementation of the Service-Learning module in the Human and Social Sciences Faculty. This oriented the new Service-Learning projects towards those hardest hit by the pandemic and towards addressing the social needs arising from the context (such as loneliness or lack of access to public benefits). This was also the case on the Philosophy degree.

The Zofio neighbourhood association, in the Usera District, told us of its residents' unease, as they were weary of being portrayed by the mass media as denizens of a troubled area, and even more so after the outbreak of the pandemic. This led us to initiate a Service-Learning project in which philosophy students, through social art techniques such as journalistic and documentary theatre, take the story constructed by the media, contrasting and critically analysing it with the residents themselves, and thereby making it visible and denouncing it through a creative product, in this case, a radio play.

The next stage of this project will aim to build the "true story" of the neighbourhood, its history and its spaces, hand-in-hand with the residents, bringing this to the public through another creative artwork.

From our point of view, projects like this one show that Service-Learning is an effective way to integrate education, social engagement and community participation in a context like the current one. The news, WhatsApp and podcasts have enabled us to connect the university community with civil society, and artistic disciplines such as radio theatre have been the vehicle for joint critical reflection, awareness and empowerment. As for the philosophy students, they will not only develop critical thinking and debating skills but will also discover through experience that their philosophical knowledge is a powerful tool for social change.

Responses to Covid-19 from Service-Learning KULEUVEN

Nicolas Standaert

Connected Encounters: Service-learning in a Chinese Context

As part of their curriculum, master's degree students from the Department of Chinese Studies at the KU Leuven spend one academic year in Mainland China or Taiwan on an exchange program. While abroad they are required to participate in a one-year service-learning project. Many students work with organizations such as Stepping Stones, a not-for-profit charitable organization registered in



Shanghai with the mission of improving the education and general welfare of disadvantaged children in China. Students are typically engaged in a variety of projects such as, for example, teaching English to (children of) migrant workers or helping out at old people's homes and schools for disabled or disadvantaged children. During the experience, students report back by means of structured and guided reflections linking the experience to academic theories on the issues and contexts they have encountered while in China.



Coronavirus Breakout: Service-learning Interrupted

In February 2020, students in Mainland China reported that their service-learning projects were being indefinitely halted as a result of the sudden coronavirus outbreak. One student was stuck in the quarantined city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the breakout. In March 2020, the KU Leuven decided to recall *all* students from Mainland China. As a result, most students could not continue or even start their service-learning projects in China. In mid-March 2020, the Belgian government moved to install a countrywide lockdown, effectively forcing all universities to revert to online teaching and temporarily prohibit all off-campus activities such as internships and on-site service-learning projects. The service-learning team subsequently had to come up with a corona assignment, a digital alternative for the Chinese Studies master's degree students.

Digital Service-learning: Chinese Emperor in Five Days

In collaboration with our community partners in the City of Leuven, and in response to community-identified needs, in June 2020 nine Chinese Studies students worked for a full month to design and ultimately create an activity playbook for local children and youth organizations. The playbook scripts a Chinese theme week for children aged 6 to 12 with games and activities that immerse the children in Chinese culture and history for five days. Throughout the entire project, students were asked to critically reflect on the process. By means of online reflection and learning modules developed by the service-learning team, students were invited to think critically about topics such as stereotypes and implicit bias. These reflective exercises helped the students in their process of creating a safe, inclusive and stereotype-free environment for children to engage with a different culture.

The final result is an extensive activity playbook, titled 'Chinese Emperor in Five Days', that introduces the children to Chinese culture by means of five themes (History, Food, Art, Invention and Ritual), related to the five virtues of the Chinese Emperor. The Emperor is traditionally considered the 'son of heaven' and as such personifies the most virtuous person

on earth. Throughout the theme week, children play games and engage in activities that allow them to acquire the Emperor's five virtues by the end of the week, thus becoming Chinese Emperors themselves.

"We developed an activity playbook from beginning to end, with introductory YouTube videos, a Pinterest board, supplementary materials and a detailed script for an entire week. Supervisors don't need to be Chinese Emperors to give the children a magical Chinese week", said Jan Vinken, a Chinese Studies student.



During the summer of 2020 the activity playbook had its first test run in the children's program at the Sint-Maartensdal community centre in Leuven. Their first ever Chinese theme week was a great success, and both children and supervisors were excited about the (re)creative possibilities the playbook offers. "Due to the corona crisis, many children were cooped up for too long in small apartments, so it's a relief that this summer they were able to play outside. But what a surprising treat it was for the children to travel all the way to China", says Sofie Abts, Leuven community centres coordinator.

E-MAD: Improving Digital Literacy through Service-Learning and E-Mentoring

Mirian Hervás-Torres, Tamara Polo-Sánchez, Susana Tallón-Rosales, Ana Isabel Muñoz-Camacho y Alicia Muñoz-Silva

Change of Vision from Higher Education Institutions

Today's society presents new demands, methods, technologies, communication networks, and even scientific advances, and this is reflected in the field of work. In this scenario, new professions appear in emerging contexts, with new skills becoming a challenge, especially those relating to technology. This challenge is related to addressing digital skills in the universities themselves, in order to achieve better employability.



Purpose of the E-MAD

The E-MAD Programme is a training course funded by Medialab at the University of Granada, whose aim is to help citizens at social risk improve their use of technologies and digital media and develop the digital skills that will assist them in their search for employment and insertion in the knowledge society.

Who can benefit from E-MAD?

University students: participants as volunteer e-mentors. They will be able to take advantage of near-professional opportunities for experiential learning. They will develop and improve their higher-level knowledge and cognitive, emotional and social skills and competencies, thereby increasing their employability and empowerment profile.



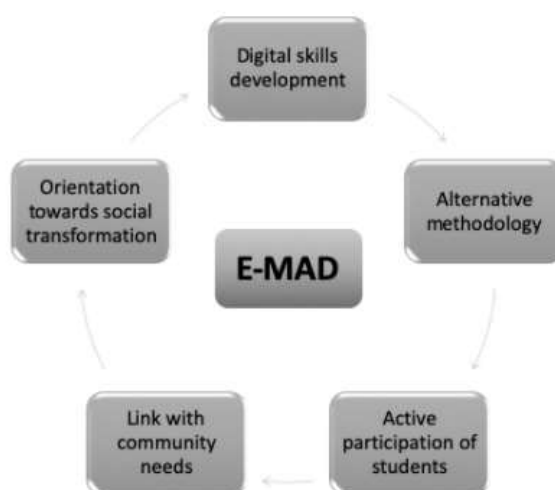
Guadalinfo Centre Users: voluntary participants. They will improve their professional outcomes and, in the process, their digital competencies, in addition to the personal satisfaction gained.

How can you participate in this programme?

The project teaching staff disseminated the programme through presentations among students on degrees such as Pedagogy, Psychology, Social Education, Social Work and Economic Sciences.

These presentations explained what the programme consisted of and requested the students' participation. Those interested were trained in the contents necessary to carry out the programme and subsequently went on to develop the e-mentoring sessions.

Also, the managers of the Guadalinfo centres informed their users of the project and it was publicised in the social media.



E-MAD Implementation

Once university students and Guadalinfo users had been selected, they were matched according to shared characteristics. Each pair planned a work schedule with a maximum duration of 90 minutes for each weekly e-mentoring session. This was imparted virtually on the project website (<https://e-madproject.com/>) using Teams. The e-sessions worked on different areas, depending on the needs identified, such as applying for job offers, employment apps, CVs and video curricula, etc. Monthly follow-up sessions were held with the participating students to ascertain their needs, difficulties, etc.



Proposal for change

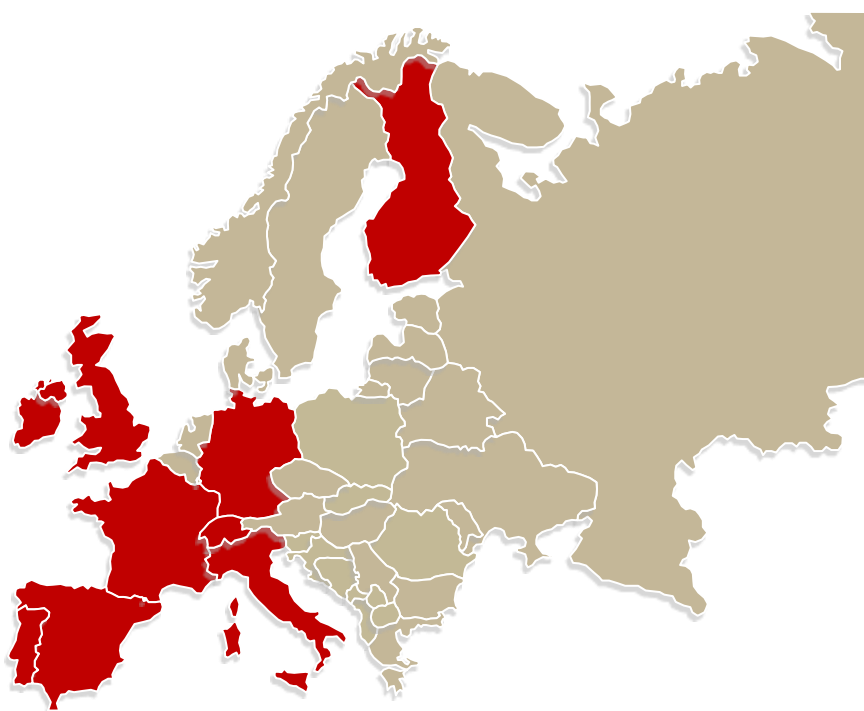
Through the impetus of this programme on the use of technologies, we envisage the creation of a management and organizational model, along with new infrastructures and educational, social, economic and community resources, which can lead to the pre-development of social enterprises materializing the commitment to employability coming from the University itself; that is, a more equitable and efficient distribution of knowledge to all those who may be at social risk, bringing higher education institutions closer to social and community realities to build a path to enhanced inclusion and well-being in society.



CHAPTER 3: EUROPEAN ASSOCIATIONS & NETWORKS RELATED TO SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2020

In the EOSLHE 2019 Annual Report one chapter was devoted to showcasing S-L related associations and networks in Europe (EOSLHE, 2020a). A number of contacts and experts were consulted, and internet searches were also carried out. For this 2020 Annual Report, an updated overview was made.

European countries where EOSLHE has identified national networks/associations



European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education

Pilar Aramburuzabala Higuera

EASLHE was created to promote S-L in European higher education and to foster related scholarly activities. It also has many collaborations with other networks and institutions outside Europe. Recently, jointly with the Pacto de América Latina por la Educación con Calidad Humana (Palech), EOSLHE and the National Distance Education University (UNED), EASLHE developed the Practical Guide on e-Service-Learning in response to COVID-19 to support adaptation of Service-Learning courses to the new situation (EASLHE, 2020).

Seeds from EASLHE gave rise to another project titled “Europe Engage”. Upon its completion, the informal European Network of Service-Learning in Higher Education was launched in Galway in September 2017.

The Network sets out to realise its vision of every European university building a sense of ‘community’ into its higher education curriculum, yielding significant benefits for students, teaching staff, the university, the wider community and the nation itself.

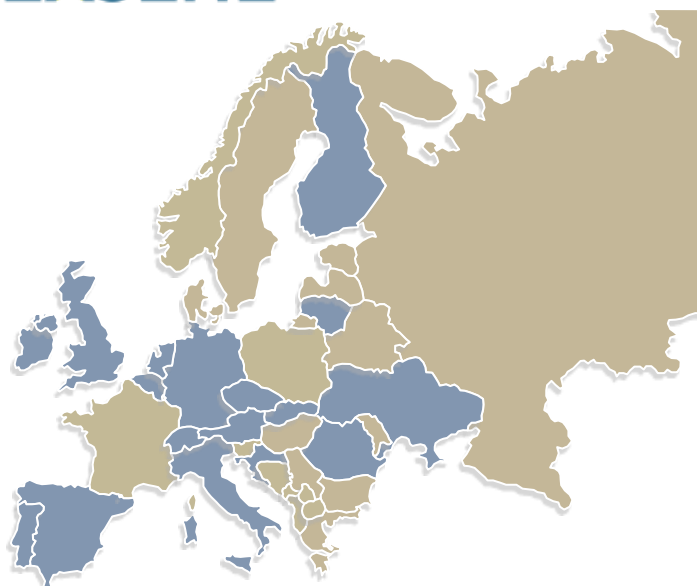
It aims to ensure the development and sharing of quality S-L practices and research, professional training, and institutionalization processes.

Member countries of the European Association of S-L in Higher Education

Country representatives from the first wave of participants included Austria, Croatia, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The second S-L in Higher Education meeting took place on 21st September 2018 during the 9th Spanish and 1st European Conference on Service-Learning in Higher Education in Madrid. There it was decided that the Network would become a formal association.

EASLHE



The official establishment of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE) took place in Antwerp on Saturday 21st September 2019 during the 2nd European Conference of Service-Learning in Higher Education. The Association stemmed from the European Network, launched two years previously. For legal reasons EASLHE was established in a single member country but with international partners. It is based on Belgian association law.

The goal of the Association is to promote S-L in European Higher Education and to foster scholarly activities related to it. This includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- disseminating information and knowledge on S-L
- fostering and developing training activities and resources
- establishing links among local, transnational and global networks
- organizing meetings, exchanges, seminars, conferences, congresses and other events, alone and/or with groups pursuing the same objective
- advocating S-L development in higher education institutions
- contributing to the development of policy recommendations and initiatives
- supporting individuals and institutions in developing S-L projects
- conducting and encouraging research and scientific publications on S-L
- raising funds and accepting legacies and donations to achieve the goals of the Association



General meeting of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education.

EASLHE has a General Assembly, a President and a General Meeting. Every member of the Association automatically becomes a member of the General Assembly. The General Assembly elects the President of the Association and the members of the General Meeting.

On Saturday 21st September 2019, the General Assembly of the Association held its first General Meeting, with representatives from Croatia, Belgium, Spain, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, The Netherlands, Romania and Portugal. At this first General Meeting Pilar Aramburuzabala was elected President of EASLHE.

Irish Campus Engage network

Based within the Irish Universities Association, Campus Engage is devoted to supporting Irish higher education institutions in embedding, upgrading and promoting civic and community engagement among staff and students in teaching, learning and research.



Campus Engage is overseen by a Steering Committee, facilitated by the IUA. Currently all seven Irish universities and the Technological University of Dublin are represented on the Steering Committee and participate in the following areas of activity:

Community-Based Teaching and Learning: accredited experiential community-based learning/ community-based research (service-learning).

Engaged Research and Innovation for Social Impact: research that aims to improve, understand or investigate an issue of public interest or concern, advanced *with* community partners rather than *for* them.

Student Volunteering: supporting and promoting student volunteering through our online 'tech for good' system, studentvolunteer.ie

Planning for Impact: building a national framework for measuring and evaluating the positive social impact of civic and community engagement in higher education.

For more information, please consult our website: <http://www.campusengage.ie/>

German Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility – Hochschulnetzwerk

Janine Bittner & Janina Kempchen, retrieved from the 2019 Annual Report of EOSLHE

The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility in Germany is a network of higher education institutions which has set itself the goal (within the framework of the "university third mission") of encouraging students, teachers and other academic staff to take on social responsibility, of providing them with support and of actively contributing to knowledge transfer from the university to civil society and vice versa.

The network was founded ten years ago and today comprises more than 40 members, universities and applied sciences universities in Germany and Austria. (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung, n.d.-c)

The member higher education institutions strengthen integration and promote civic engagement among students and academic staff by supporting and promoting the implementation of the S-L approach, by implementing and supporting accompanying research activities on its impact, by supporting measures to integrate refugees at the university and through an exchange on the possible shapes taken by the “University of the Future”.

The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility sees close exchange between higher education institutions and civil society as indispensable to the solution of present and future social problems. The network follows the vision of higher education institutions as “places for transdisciplinary dialogue” and as “places for the holistic academic education of personalities” (*Memorandum.Pdf*, n.d.), which should be prepared for the challenges of a constantly changing globalized society.

In 2015 the formalization of the network through the foundation of an association took place (the process of institutionalization as a formal association). Universities and applied sciences universities in German-speaking countries and non-profit organizations of supra-regional scope can join the network as full members, while individuals who are fully aware of their social responsibility and feel an affinity with the Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility and its aims can join as associate members. (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung, n.d.-d).

Currently, the Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility comprises more than 40 members, in particular institutional members: universities and applied sciences universities, mostly in the federal states of Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia, followed by Bavaria, Berlin, Hesse and also Austria.

The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility pursues its goals by connecting its members, especially at the level of higher education institution boards; through fostering professional and academic exchange; by supporting research on S-L, community engagement and campus-community partnerships; by conducting political lobbying activities; and through press and publicity work (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung, n.d.-b).

Since the network was established it has received funding from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (project funding for “talent management for civic engagement and social responsibility of higher education institutions”, 2013-2015); the Association of German Scientific Foundations (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft) (Competition: “More than Research and Teaching! Universities in Society” 2011-2013, funding line “Campus & Community” since 2011); the Mercator Foundation (financial sponsorship for UNIAKTIV at the University of Duisburg-Essen, 2006-2009); and the Robert Bosch Foundation

(funding for the Do it! programme, “Mehrwert” Agency, Stuttgart, 2007-2013, funding for the “Mehrwert” agency as part of setting up and supporting the “Academy on Societal Responsibility”) (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung, n.d.-a).

The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility holds a conference every year, with the first national conference on service-learning taking place in 2009. The next conference will be held at the University of Duisburg-Essen at the end of November, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility, on the subject “universities in society”. In the sessions on research, the question of student acquisition of competencies and the impact of S-L will be examined. In the sessions on transfer of practical experiences, examples of successful promotion and structural development of knowledge transfer from the university to civil society will be presented (Universität Duisburg-Essen, 2019).



In addition to hosting the annual conference, the network regularly publishes a newsletter. The implementation and further development of the main topics are undertaken by different working groups.

The “quality development” working group makes a valuable contribution to the quality development of S-L projects in German-speaking countries. In 2018 ten criteria for successful S-L activities were defined. The “research” working group aims to contribute to research on S-L and community engagement and deals with the effects and requirements of S-L, amongst other things. It also serves as a networking hub for these activities (Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung, n.d.-a).

The Higher Education Network on Societal Responsibility has also taken on leadership of the “Academy on Societal Responsibility” and as part of this programme it regularly offers training courses and workshops (also available as online courses) in the areas of S-L, citizenship education, social entrepreneurship and the development of cooperation between universities and civil society (cf. Hochschulnetzwerk Bildung durch Verantwortung 2019 – Fortbildungen und Workshops).

The Network has its head office in Eichstätt. The management and monitoring structure consists of the Executive Board, the Scientific Committee and the members’ representatives. The First Chairman is Jörg Miller, head of UNIAKTIV, the Centre for Societal Learning and Civic Engagement at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Portuguese Network of Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning

Maria Vargas-Moniz, Carmo Themudo, Luisa Mota Ribeiro

In Portugal there exists an informal network in service-learning. In the last three years there has been constant work undertaken by a number of higher education institutions (HEI) within the Observatory for Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions (ORSIES) (<http://orsies.forum.pt>). More and more HEI are using S-L methodology. After the Green Book on Social Responsibility and Higher Education was presented in March 2018, an S-L working group coordinated by the Universidade Católica Portuguesa was created. The members of this group received training in the methodology, shared experiences, and issued a questionnaire at the end of the work year to 18 IES to consult them on the creation of an S-L network (specifically on the expected role of the network, the model that should be adopted, its main aims and its specific objectives). In 2021 ORSIES will promote more training in S-L, hold meetings with European and international networks to create synergies, disseminate experiences and share best practices.

Spanish Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education

Pilar Aramburuzabala Higuera, retrieved from the 2019 Annual Report of EOSLHE

In 2010 an informal University Service-Learning Network was created with the support of the Institute of Education Sciences (ICE) at the University of Barcelona.

The Spanish Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education, ApS(U), was created in 2017 with the purpose of strengthening collaboration in and exchange of S-L experiences, disseminating educational and social projects based on the methodology, promoting S-L research, and supporting institutionalization of S-L in Spanish universities.

ApS(U) is made up of university teachers, researchers and administrative staff. The Association is the leader of the [EOSLHE](#) project. Its members are all engaged with S-L and have experience, capacity and expertise in the topic. ApS(U) works closely with the European Association of S-L in Higher Education.



The Board of Directors is composed of seven members, one President and one Vice-President. Every decision concerning ApS(U) is agreed on jointly by the board members.

Its activities include, but are not limited to: dissemination (conferences, seminars and other meetings of a scientific nature); research (preparation of reports and studies on the education system, educational policies and teaching methodologies related to S-L); methodology (development of programs, services and training materials in S-L especially aimed at the field of higher education); publications (creation, direction and participation in publications in any format that deal with S-L and educational or social matters related to the methodology); networks (participation in networks and creation of alliances with other entities, whether public or private, Spanish or foreign, that promote S-L); and institutionalization (development of or participation in S-L promotion activities among political and academic authorities, media and social agents).

Italian Network of Service-Learning and Community Engagement

Cinzia Albanesi, retrieved from the 1st Newsletter of EOSLHE (Alonso et al., 2019)

In 2016 the University of Bologna hosted the IARSCLE European Regional Research Conference, launched the Italian Network of S-L and Community Engagement and started its first pilot experience, offering S-L to a small group of students on the master's degree in Clinical Psychology as part of the activities of the Community Psychology Lab. The experience was successful, being well received by both students and the Director of the master's degree, who agreed to double the experience in the subsequent year.

The Italian Network includes representatives from twelve Italian universities, five foreign universities and four private training agencies. It held its third meeting in November 2019 at the University of Bologna, and its Community Psychology team, led this time by Professor Cinzia Albanesi, building on the legacy of Europe Engage, and thanks to the Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliance Rural 3.0 Project (<https://rural.ffzg.unizg.hr/>), engaged in a new challenge: expanding S-L beyond its "urban" boundaries and bringing it to the rural communities of the Romagna district, where it may be even more needed.

Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network

Alzbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

The Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network is an informal network of individuals involved in S-L development and implementation at different levels of education in Central and Eastern Europe. The network was established in 2016 as a result of the support program set up by CLAYSS (Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio



Solidario) in Central and Eastern Europe. Since April 2016 CLAYSS has supported partners in different countries in Central and Eastern Europe through training, facilitation, bibliography design tailored to the region and technical assistance to promote S-L on a regional level. Since these activities began, partners have been meeting online and on-site to promote exchange, mutual understanding and shared learning, understanding that cooperation among key actors provides support and strengthens S-L in the region. As part of this development the Central and Eastern European Service-Learning Network has held Regional Service-Learning Weeks in different cities across the region. The last S-L week was organized online from 13th to 16th July 2020.

In 2020 the Network launched the First Regional Award for successful Service-Learning practice, aimed at pinpointing and acknowledging the work of educational institutions carrying out Service-Learning projects that promote active youth citizenship and integrate students' curricular learning with Service-Learning initiatives to the benefit of the community.



See our video about the network:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k637ajuw0TM&feature=youtu.be>

To learn about the Network's upcoming activities, please visit us on Facebook under CEE Service-Learning, contact internacionales@clayss.org.ar or visit:

<http://www.clayss.org/CEE/network.html>

United Kingdom Community Engaged Learning/Service-Learning Network

Mark Charlton

The formation of a United Kingdom Community Engaged Learning/Service-Learning Network (CEL/SL) has taken place in the past few months and the current emphasis of its work is to get more practitioners involved.

A handful of committed staff from Nottingham Trent University, Leicester De Montfort University, University College London and King's College London have been working closely together to bring others into the conversation and identify the types of support that should be offered.

In May 2020, a UK national conference was called with an open invitation for people involved in CEL/SL to discuss their experiences and suggest what a national network should look like.

More than 70 participants attended and gave good indications as to why a UK network should be created. At the same time inspiration was drawn from international networks including EASLE, where two network members sit on the general committee. Its President Dr Pilar Aramburuzabala launched our national conference. We have close connections to IARSLCE in the United States and welcomed noted Service-Learning academic and writer Andy Furco, Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, University of Minnesota, and Drew Pearl, Director of Community Engagement Research and Publications at the University of Alabama's Center for Community-Based Partnerships, in an online discussion.

The network is still finalising its mission and vision but consultations with practitioners so far have identified the following key areas that would enable the network to provide support to those practicing CEL/SL in the UK:

1. Offering Peer Support/Learning
2. Documenting the UK SL/CEL landscape
3. Increasing CEL/SL visibility + showing its value
4. Reflecting the UK policy landscape
5. Developing scholarship and publications
6. Producing resources and holding events
7. Co-creating work with the community
8. Developing Purpose/Mission

Flemish network for Service-Learning in higher education

Ellen Decraene

S-L is a relatively new pedagogy within the Flemish educational context. In recent years however, service-learning has received more and more attention. This growing enthusiasm resulted in the organization of the second European conference of service-learning in higher education in Antwerp, Belgium, in 2019. This joint venture brought together an organizational team composed of representatives of more than 13 Flemish educational institutions. The conference not only witnessed the official establishment of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education but proved to be an inspiring gathering

on many levels, as it fostered the desire of the founding institutions to form a Flemish network for service-learning in higher education.



The University Centre Saint-Ignatius Antwerp (www.ucsia.org) is responsible for the practical coordination of the network.

The central aim is to promote service-learning in higher education in Flanders and to support scientific activities related to this subject. The network aims to achieve these core goals through the following strategic activities:

- 1 Fostering the visibility and recognition of service-learning as a labour-intensive teaching method:
 - a. by knowledge dissemination through the organization of meetings, workshops, conferences and other events of an either internal or public character, organized by the network alone and/or in collaboration with other institutions or networks with a similar scope.
 - b. by promoting the development of service-learning in higher education institutions.
- 2 The creation of a learning community:
 - a. by organizing training courses.
 - b. by creating a digital platform to exchange best practices, toolkits, handbooks and links to network partners' websites.

3 Research support for quality improvement:

- a. by contributing to an efficient exchange of research output among different institutions.
- b. by initiating co-research projects.
- c. by contributing to the development of policy recommendations and initiatives.

On 10th September 2020 the network organized an online conference day on the challenges and opportunities of digital service-learning. The three main objectives of this conference were to meet the urgent need for elementary information on service-learning, the in-depth exchange of best practices and the development of a learning community. The first conference day concerned the development of service-learning in Flanders and mainly focused on an introduction to service-learning pedagogy and sharing best practices. The plenary session by international speaker Prof. Dr. Nieves Tapia, along with the workshops and poster sessions, gave the Flemish participants an opportunity to learn from their European counterparts (and vice-versa). The second conference day brought together European teachers, students, professors, researchers and policy makers with a particular interest in and/or experience with community service-learning. In addition to the various workshops and round tables, keynote speaker Seth Pollack synthesized lessons learned from fifty years of service learning in US higher education, focusing on the challenges experienced in developing a robust civic learning agenda. In addition, Prof. Dr. Bojana Culum presented innovative policy tools and frameworks for supporting, monitoring and assessing community engagement in European higher education and discussed these frameworks with respondents Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Stark, Prof. Dr. Lorrain McIlrath and Prof. Dr. Pilar Aramburuzabala. Altogether, the conference attracted more than 250 Flemish and international participants who expressed great enthusiasm and the need for further collaboration, exchange and support.

In October 2020 the website www.servicelearningvlaanderen.be was launched. This website will facilitate the promotion of networking activities, the service-learning activities of each network member, announcements of national and international conferences, exchanges of best practices, communication of research results and new publications on the topic of service-learning (among other activities). The aim of the website is to reach out to teachers, policy makers, organizations and students with a particular interest and/or expertise in the topic of service-learning.

CHAPTER 4: ACTIVE EUROPEAN PROJECTS RELATED TO SERVICE-LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2020

In the EOSLHE 2019 Annual Report a chapter was devoted to active and finished projects related to S-L (EOSLHE, 2020a). This 2020 Annual Report includes those active projects that will finish this year or later. Each of them has been disturbed by the pandemic and has had to adapt its development to the new reality.

Projects compiled in the EOSLHE 2019 Annual Report



CIVIS - A European Civic University Alliance – ERASMUS+ ACTION – KA2

Dates of the project: October 2019 – September 2022

CIVIS is a project Co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. It consists of the development of a European Civic University formed by the alliance of eight leading higher education research institutions across Europe: Aix-Marseille Université, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Universitatea din București, Université libre de Bruxelles, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Sapienza Università di Roma, Stockholm University and Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. Rooted in their urban and regional landscapes, our CIVIS member universities actively contribute to the social, cultural and economic dynamism of their ecosystems and promote European values such as inclusiveness, gender equality, non-

discrimination and social equity. CIVIS will forge richer interactions and the co-creation of knowledge and skills with citizens, schools, companies and social and cultural associations (CIVIS, 2020).

The mission of CIVIS is to create a truly unique European inter-university campus where students, academics, researchers and staff can move and collaborate as freely as within their institution of origin. We will develop a deep level of European integration, involving joint learning pathways, development of complementary research facilities and diverse degree pathways.



The goals of CIVIS are:

- sharing a long-term strategy on education, research, and innovation
- creating a European inter-university campus
- designing new pedagogical and mobility models
- improving social inclusiveness and geographical balance
- preparing new generations for future changes with ambitious joint educational programmes at BA, MA and PhD level, recognised by the European Union
- developing research and innovation projects in response to local, regional and global challenges
- increasing student mobility: 10% by 2022, 50% by 2025
- becoming a legal entity by 2022 and a participative, inclusive, civic university by 2030

For more details, please visit <https://civis.eu/en>

UNICORN - UNiversity COmmunity LeaRNing

Ellen Decraene

The Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project titled [UNICORN](#) (UNiversity COmmunity LeaRNing) links Community S-L to international mobility. The initial duration of the project was from September 2019 to July 2022. Due to COVID-19, the planned project activities had to be put on hold in the spring of 2020. Therefore, the Management Assembly of the project decided to extend the project duration by 6 months. The Project Coordinator, the University of Bologna (UNIBO), successfully applied to the Italian National Grant Agency for an exceptional extension.



UNIBO and the project partners* (academic partners and community organizations) picked up the thread of the project at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year. In the new timeframe the aim is to start organizing student mobility between the European academic partners as of the 2021-2022 academic year.

The development of mobility through UNICORN is a work in progress. One option is to organize it within the Erasmus+ programme, making use of the Erasmus+ grants to finance student movements. Under the current Erasmus+ programme, the minimum duration of a student study stay is 3 months, the maximum 12 months.

The possibilities offered by the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, developments in blended learning and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), and the constraints imposed by COVID-19 also bring other mobility options into focus, such as shorter stays with a virtual introductory pathway and a reflective follow-up pathway.

The various project groups will continue to work on the planned project outputs in the future. These outputs include:

- integrating student mobility in the Erasmus+ programme
- finalising conclusive bilateral agreements between the partners
- developing a range of international CSL courses with each partner, open to international students
- developing a UNICORN quality label to ensure that the three components of Community Service Learning (A collaborative partnership between the academic partners and the community, applying academic knowledge and critical thinking skills, reflection and assessment leading to greater understanding of course content and civic engagement) are present in each UNICORN study stay.

In early December 2020, a virtual Joint Staff Training Event is planned for academics, international relations officers and community partners. The purpose of the training course is to ensure that all UNICORN project participants have a common knowledge base on service learning in general and to show how service learning can be incorporated into mobility programs. The training event is designed to help participants understand the why, who, when, what, where and how of service-learning in the context of UNICORN mobility.



* The academic partners of UNICORN are the University of Bologna (coordinator), University of Antwerp, University of Leipzig, University College Cork, Universidad Complutense de Madrid and the University of Pretoria (South Africa). Each European academic partner has a community partner. UCSIA (Universitair Centrum Sint-Ignatius Antwerpen) is the community partner of the University of Antwerp.

Engage Students – Promoting Student Social Responsibility by Embedding Service Learning in Curricula – KA2

Gabriel Dimas

Dates of the project: Sept 2018 - 2021

The **ENGAGE STUDENTS** project focuses on the social responsibility of higher education institutions at student and teacher level. The project's general objective is to empower the social dimension of higher education by increasing its relevance for society through embedding service-learning as a common pedagogical approach within education and research practice. The project's specific objectives are as follows:



- to explore existing service-learning methodology and other forms of community-related learning and research
- to develop a methodological toolkit and pedagogical workbook to be used by teachers
- to build the critical mass of knowledge and resources needed among partner HEIs to foster the use of service learning and other community-related learning methodologies.

The project methodology follows a pedagogical approach with the main aim of strengthening educators' didactic skills for working with innovative teaching methods and engaging students in more practice-based projects. The main outcomes so far are as follows:

- [Service Learning. A Workbook for Higher Education](#) draws on the practical experience of the project members from five partner universities in Europe (Dublin City University in Ireland, Porto University in Portugal, Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania, the University of Vienna in Austria, and University Politehnica of Bucharest in Romania) of planning and implementing such courses at university level. The workbook serves as a starting point for working with the Service-Learning approach for experienced and less experienced teachers. Short chapters make it easy for teachers to decide whether the Service-Learning Approach fits their teaching objectives and interests. Experienced teachers may be more interested in specific topics and zoom into one of the chapters. The workbook gives practical guidance throughout, using self-guided tasks, checklists and reflection exercises. The workbook's structure is twofold: The first part focuses on Service Learning as a pedagogy and explains the foundations of Service Learning. The second part is more action-driven and provides guidance on key questions, action plans and examples for independently designing and conducting a Service-Learning course.
- [Service-learning methodology toolkit](#) provides an evidence-based insight into service learning and seven practical teaching approaches: 1) community-based research, 2) project-based learning, 3) participatory action research, 4) internships, 5) volunteering, 6) action-reflection methodologies and 7) social entrepreneurship. The toolkit adopts a comparative approach with the main aim of mapping the strengths and weaknesses of the seven practical teaching approaches analysed compared with service-learning.
- [Teacher Training Week](#) offered intensive training in the field of Service Learning and other methodologies to embrace student engagement at university level (30 hours). As Service Learning is becoming more and more popular, the Winter School set out to discuss how university teachers plan, coordinate and implement Service Learning. The

main target groups were teachers in higher education institutions who already work with the Service-Learning approach and other project-based methodologies or who plan to work with it. Participants of the Winter School came from Lithuania, Portugal, Ireland, Romania, Germany, Indonesia, Iran and Austria. The Winter School provided lectures from European experts, interactive exercises, the opportunity for an international exchange of knowledge with other educators and the presentation of a workbook on how to carry out Service Learning.

The ENGAGE STUDENTS Consortium comprises six partners with relevant expertise in university social responsibility, community engagement and service learning: [University Politehnica of Bucharest](#) (RO)- coordinator, [University of Vienna](#) (AT), [Dublin City University](#) (IRL), [Kaunas University of Technology](#) (LT), [Universita degli studi di Roma La Sapienza](#) (IT) and [University of Porto](#) (PT).

For more details, see <https://engagestudents.eu/>

Rural 3.0: Service Learning for the Rural Development – KA2

Joana Padrão & Linda Saraiva

Dates of the project: January 2019 – 2021

Title: Rural 3.0: Service-Learning for Rural Development (Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal, Erasmus +).



RURAL 3.0
: SERVICE LEARNING
FOR THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The RURASL project was established to set up a framework for an integrated transnational approach to academic teaching and learning that contributes to the development of rural areas, meeting their needs and boosting innovation in these areas through innovative methodology and creating community-higher education institution (HEI) partnerships. The project is an Erasmus+ KA2 three-year funded project (2019-2021; Reference 599382-EPP-1-2018-1-PT EPPKA2-KA) and brought together eight higher education institutions and eight rural organizations from eight European countries: Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Croatia and the Netherlands.

The overall aim of RURASL is to implement Service-Learning and social entrepreneurship projects in different European rural contexts, which make up over 90% of the territory of the European Union and are home to more than 56% of the population, and where much remains to be done in terms of civic engagement, Service-Learning and social entrepreneurship within

higher education. This is an innovative initiative and helps to bring HEIs and rural organizations together through engaging in this educational methodology and these social initiatives.

After the first year of the project, the covid-19 pandemic unexpectedly hit the world. With collective effort, commitment and creativity, the project continued, becoming an example to be followed by other European Union projects, in addition to an indisputable pedagogical approach to teaching that proved to be firm in times of the covid-19 pandemic, when more common teaching approaches were seen to be much less effective.

The main outputs and activities achieved so far in this project are:

- a survey of the needs of target groups from the eight participating countries;
- a report on the needs of target groups and an analysis of existing Service-Learning curricula from the eight participating countries, helping to identify and transfer best practices;
- the RURASL database, compiling the pool of rural community and higher education institution stakeholders interested in partnerships;
- an international academic module on rural Service-Learning and rural social entrepreneurship, with eight courses;
- a MOOC on rural Service-Learning for educators and rural organisations;
- the RURASL Hub (<http://hub.rural.ffzg.hr/>), with a number of different sections, such as: "search for partners," which is the database; "digital learning tools," which leads to the MOOC and the eight courses on rural Service-Learning and rural social entrepreneurship; "conversation area," which is the RURASL Facebook page; and "best practices," containing best practices from the eight participating countries;
- a Community Guide on rural Service-Learning and rural social entrepreneurship in eight languages (English, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Croatian, Lithuanian and Italian);
- the methodology of the Online World Café for rural Service-Learning ;
- the Online World Café for rural Service-Learning;
- and a Social Hackathon on rural Service-Learning.

It is also important to highlight that in this project, digital collaborative and learning tools (the Hub, the Online World Café) and the Social Hackathon on rural Service-Learning (as part of students' virtual mobility) facilitate the growth of new knowledge-sharing processes and tools

among rural stakeholders and HEIs. The above outcomes and a wide variety of information and practical tools are available in the RURASL project website (<https://rural.ffzg.unizg.hr/>) and Hub (<http://hub.rural.ffzg.hr/>).

SLIHE - Service-Learning in Higher Education –Fostering the Third Mission of Universities and Civic Engagement of Students – KA2

Alzbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

Dates of the project: 2017 – 2020

Service-learning in higher education – fostering the third mission of universities and students' civic engagement (SLIHE) is an Erasmus+ project (2017-1-SK01- KA203-035352). The main objective of the project was to strengthen the capacities of HEIs in the fulfillment of their third mission and to improve students' civic engagement through the implementation of the innovative S-L approach in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The partial aim of the project was to improve the quality and relevance of study offered in the field of implementation of service-learning in higher education curricula through the development of training curricula and materials adapted to the context of Central and Eastern European countries. The project coordinator was Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. Project partners hailed from the Czech Republic (Palacký University in Olomouc), Romania (Babes Bolyai University), Croatia (University of Rijeka), Germany (Catholic University Eichstätt – Ingolstadt) and Austria (University of Krems), with associated partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Argentina.



The project activities consisted of creating, testing and disseminating innovative approaches used during the realization of S-L projects and, upon their completion, developing and disseminating the S-L approach in the higher education field and beyond, thereby fostering the social role of universities and civic engagement among students. Among the main innovative outcomes of the project were: 1) training for teachers in S-L and a guide for trainers; 2) the publication of a manual for implementing S-L in higher education; 3) recommendations for the implementation of S-L in HEIs and best practice examples. The outputs were published in English and partners' national languages and are available online on the project website. Apart from partner institutions, their teachers and students, the project had an impact on local communities. It broadened cooperation between actors and decision-makers in various areas of civic society, citizens and universities. The final conference of the project was organized as

the Third European Conference on Service-learning in Higher Education, with the title What Does it Mean to (Be)come an Engaged University, in July 2020 online.

Information about the project, outputs and final conference is available on the website: www.slihe.eu.

INTEREURISLAND Smart world - innovative strategies for internationalizing university social responsibility and Service Learning – ERASMUS K3

Dates of the project: August 2020 - April 2021

The project “Civic commitment and quality assurance of Higher Education in Europe” is an Erasmus K3 project. It is



supported by the Canary Islands Agency for University Quality and Educational Evaluation [Agencia Canaria de Calidad Universitaria y Evaluación Educativa] and the government of the Canary Islands. The main objectives of the project are to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education and encourage active citizenship. Also a key activity is to develop tools and resources in order to improve the recognition of ECTS-SL credits for students and teachers by universities and the assessment of these experiences in institutional accreditation processes by the agencies. Participation includes a minimum of four organisations from three different countries, of which three must be public authorities from each of the participating countries, and a public or private organisation with knowledge and expertise in policy analysis and evaluation.



For more details, please visit <https://view.genial.ly/5e42ec56d2e2250ef0969408>

UNISERVITATE – Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education

The UNISERVITATE Programme of Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education aims to generate systemic change in Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs) through the institutionalization of Service-Learning (SL) as a tool to achieve its mission of comprehensive



education. Quality Service-Learning can offer a specific pedagogical contribution to Catholic higher education institutions, helping them to articulate their social outreach and spiritual identity with academic activities and offering innovative ways to achieve integrated education, as demonstrated by research and some CHEI experiences.

The intention of the program is to articulate teaching, research and social outreach aligned with the central mission that CHEIs have of integrating their spiritual identity in an innovative way to engage active youth as true agents of social change, critically involved in solidarity in accordance with the social teaching of the Church.

For more details, please visit <http://www.clayss.org.ar/english/uniservitate.html>

Fostering Inclusion Through Service Learning - Asociația Langdon Down Oltenia - CET – ERASMUS+ 2020 KA2

Dates of the project: November 2020 - October 2022

This project was launched with the main objective of increasing the competences (attitudes, knowledge, skills) of people with Down syndrome (PDS) and other intellectual disabilities, and of offering support and organization for their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Service-Learning, thereby increasing their social inclusion. The project will have the following specific objectives:

- to enable PDS to be active agents in implementing the SDGs and not merely beneficiaries;
- to increase the engagement of PDS with their local communities and their social inclusion and visibility as useful and capable members of civil society;
- to transfer knowledge and tools to support and aid organizations of people with Down syndrome for their involvement in the SDGs and cooperation with PDS;

- to strengthen cooperation between organizations of people with Down syndrome and other social stakeholders in order to commonly address problems affecting local communities.

The project proposes to develop a teaching guide, S-L workshops, a training package, and a training platform. It is made up of a consortium of organisations from Romania, Spain, Croatia, Portugal, Greece and Belgium. One key entity is the Asociația Langdon Down Oltenia (ALDO).



For more details, please visit <https://www.sindrom-down.ro/>



Nature-based living-lab for an interdisciplinary practical and research semester on sustainable development and environmental protection in the Amazon Rainforest [NB-LAB]

The NB-LAB project will contribute to the modernisation and internationalisation of the higher education structures of the partner universities in Peru and Ecuador by setting up facilities for user-driven applied research and innovation through an interdisciplinary research group of Latin American and European universities that will contribute to sustainable rural community development through the preservation and responsible use of the natural resources in the Amazonian Region.



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