

PROCEEDINGS



UNISERVITATE  
Service-learning in Catholic Higher Education

UNISERVITATE COLLECTION

# I Global Symposium UNISERVITATE

October 29th-30th, 2020

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Why a committed and supportive  
Higher Education today

1.3

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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>

### 3. WHY A COMMITTED AND SUPPORTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY



#### Ignacio Sánchez Díaz

*President of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and Professor at the Faculty of Medicine. He has worked at the Clinical Hospital of the Catholic University as Chief of the Paediatric Respiratory Section and Paediatric Services. He has served as Chair of the Paediatrics Department and Director of the School of Medicine. In June 2008, he was appointed Dean of the School of Medicine. He assumed the presidency of the University in March 2010 and is currently beginning his third term.*

Thank you very much for the invitation. I am very happy to be here with you today and with the outstanding speakers at this panel. I believe that *Uniservitate* sets an example of service-learning in Catholic Higher Education. Our university is coordinating the Latin American regional hub of this programme. Today we are going to talk about the service and the spiritual dimension in the roles of Catholic universities.

I would like to give a detailed explanation of what is meant by a Higher Education that is committed, supportive and relevant to today's world. First, the aspect of commitment. I think it is evident that Higher Education has at least two main pillars. The first one is the integral education of the youth: education not only in different subjects but also in values, in citizenship, in democratic aspects, in coexistence, in the common good. One of the founders of our university, more than 130 years ago, said that Higher Education was called to form the hearts of young people, that is, to form them in such a way that they can contribute to a common national, regional and societal good.

The second pillar is concerned with the generation of new knowledge in all fields of study: in science, in humanity, in arts, in the social sciences. Today, these two main pillars of Higher Education must be geared towards social engagement, towards making a contribution to the common good, hence the importance of a committed and solidary Higher Education. We have to educate in doing. Certainly, theoretical training has to be supplemented by experience and, clearly, learning by doing leaves a much stronger, indelible mark on our youths.

In Catholic institutions, committed Higher Education also has another aspect that I would like to highlight and it is the mission of the University. A mission that has to do with its identity as a Catholic university but also with some crucial aspects such as inclusion, the ability to welcome and embrace believers and non-believers, to participate as a Catholic university in a pluralistic society, a society where all voices must be heard in a generous, open, dialoguing and very inclusive way. Our universities have to participate in the public debate. Ultimately, it is in the public debate where we can make our contribution and let our voice be heard. But it is also important to contrast it with other voices, and just as we think that we all have the pluralist right to express ourselves, ours must also be a voice that is delivered in a generous, convincing, dialoguing manner and that is very committed to social engagement, to the advancement of public service in the different countries. In sum, these are the aspects of commitment that I wanted to emphasize.

The second aspect is solidarity. Solidarity has to do with encountering the other, with being moved by the other, it also has a lot to do with getting to know other realities. In our countries, I believe that there is a call to encounter and engage in dialogue with those who are different, to listen to different ideas and points of view. Perhaps we have been talking for a long time among equal people, with similar training, similar education, similar problems. What we need, I believe, in terms of solidarity, is to go forth and encounter the most different people in our society in order to get to know different realities and to be able to value—then—that diversity. A diverse University is a better University. A University that advances towards inclusion experiences different realities that make it broader, more comprehensive and, finally, of a higher quality.

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What we seek in that higher quality is to provide the entire university community—and particularly the youths that we educate—with that varied, diverse and broad reality. In this sense, this solidarity education is based on diversity, on the search for the common good, and that is where this service-learning model appears, which values field work in very real contexts and with the genuine needs of the population. It is not that we are going to recreate needs, but that we are in the real field, knowing the real needs of this population.

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In our university, service-learning was implemented in 2004; that is, more than 16 years ago, and it began in real contexts, engaging in dialogue with municipalities, local communities, attending to real and pressing needs of a country with great diversity, which has real precariousness in some sectors of the population. From the beginning to date, we have had more than 90 courses, among which I would like to highlight the case of the School of Nursing, which has been a pioneer in this work. We have already held interdisciplinary seminars, which is an initiative that has been permeating the university in teaching aspects and that is always very good because it clearly shows the role of quality in different areas and schools. We are also writing manuals and now we have this new international experience of coordinating a regional hub of *Uniservitate*, from which we are going to learn a lot, and learn by doing, learn by example, being in the field with our students and professors, to be able to demonstrate that teaching in the field and being engaged with reality is much more significant.

So, how does a committed and supportive Higher Education meet the challenges of the present? What does it mean? What is happening today, with this very hard, very difficult pandemic, which has revealed the vulnerability of our people and has caused greater poverty, precariousness, new needs, and when universities are again asked to be very faithful to our mission of creating knowledge and delivering it at the service of the country?

I would like to highlight very briefly what Chile's national university system has been able to put at the service of the country. This is not the work of one university, but of an integrated system in which many public, religiously-affiliated, traditional and new universities as well as non-profit organisations have been able to work together and contribute in various areas, and I would like to mention the main ones: in the area of coronavirus diagnosis, in traceability, in creating mechanisms, in the manufacturing of protective clothing for the health workers and mechanical ventilators that are required for the sick, as well as in the testing of vaccines that will eventually be effective in the future. The university system has been working on the ground in a coordinated manner at the service of the country and I can say that the socially engaged universities, particularly the Catholic ones, have been very committed to working in different parts of Chile. Naturally, we must not forget the importance of science, technology and biomedicine during these challenging times, but it is necessary to say that universities have also been involved in aspects that are very clear and that especially move the universities that are represented here. These aspects have to do with education, with contributing to curricular modifications and also with ethical guidelines in a pandemic, that is, what the behaviours and ethical guidelines of a country, of a society, of the universities, of the public health system are in a pandemic. Other aspects are concerned with an analysis of the alterations in the mental health of the population as well as with employment, precariousness, and progress in economic

support. Finally, an outstanding aspect has to do with family and spiritual counselling for families and for people who have had losses to mourn in this harsh pandemic. We as universities have been present in all this. Service-learning gives us a guide to work and move forward. I think that conversations like the ones we are having today, panel discussions of this type, help us a lot to contextualise the role of Higher Education in our countries, the public role of our institutions, and to know how we can orient teaching and education towards working in real contexts and meeting the actual needs of the population.



### **Miquel Martínez**

*Professor of Education Theory and member of the Research Group in Moral Education (GREM) at the University of Barcelona. His teaching and research activity is focused on education and values, ethics, citizenship and democracy, Higher Education and teacher training. He has served as Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy, Director of the Institute of Educational Sciences and Vice Rector of the University of Barcelona.*

I would like to begin by returning to some of the ideas that Ignacio has put forward, fundamentally because when we talk about these issues of engagement and solidarity, sometimes it seems to us that they are part of a supplementary side of what the University does. That is to say, today the University is concerned with the culture of science, with the culture of quality, with seeking excellence, sometimes even confusing excellence with things that are not entirely so, but seeking it and concerned—in the best of cases—with improving teaching. However, when we talk about social responsibility and engagement, sometimes it is added as a fourth dimension and, in my opinion, if it is not integrated into the other three, it will hardly be accomplished. In other words, if we turn the issue of social responsibility, the issue of engagement, into something that is added, then it will be separate from the reality of the university. I believe that Ignacio's contribution has made it clear that engagement must be at the heart of the University and, therefore, it must be present in a transversal way when we do science, when we teach, when the faculty members work in their departments, when the students share the classrooms. These transversal elements present difficulties because they are sometimes difficult to systematise and very difficult to evaluate; therefore, it is one thing to defend this transversality of engagement, responsibility and solidarity, and another thing to think that it is going to be generated spontaneously. It has to be designed, planned and—in my

opinion—it is important to integrate it into the normal dynamics of the University, something we have tried to do at the University of Barcelona over the last few years. And—above all—to support strongly that the quality of teaching is improved by adding dimensions of engagement and solidarity. Not only does it make better citizens, but it also contributes to improving the quality of teaching. Today, quality teaching is fundamentally concerned with issues as important as, for example, that students learn in depth or that they obtain good results that allow them to reflect critically on reality, to lead collaborative processes, to investigate and, above all, to provide solutions to current problems in the world of science and technology, but also in the social world.

If Higher Education is higher, it is not because it is the final step, but because it is the highest. And if it is the highest, it means that it must be concerned with the achievement of moral values. Moral values—as we all know—are those that make life more dignified for everyone and therefore they include the common good, solidarity, engagement with the other, putting oneself in the other's place. This type of values should be pursued by the University activity. Certainly, the University has many other obligations and therefore cannot focus only on this, but it is important for it to be integrated in its usual dynamics and—above all—in the spaces of

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reflection on the quality of research and teaching.

It has been mentioned before—and it is very important—that the University is a living space for the students and also for the faculty. A living space where we learn the things we live; that is, when one learns the values of solidarity and

engagement, one does not learn them as ideals, but learns them better if in their learning contexts these values are presented as attributes, spaces of solidarity, engaged spaces, and the faculty and also the students are responsible for this. It is important to understand again that this happens within a model of university and not all universities, I think, are in the best conditions, perhaps they do not even opt for a model such as the one we are talking about here. I believe that opting for a committed and supportive University today is typical of some universities that have a vocation of social engagement understood as the common good, as contributing to make the life of all more dignified, and this does not occur in all universities. Others, perhaps, are organized with more economic criteria, far removed from this interest for the common good, and are legitimately aimed at obtaining private goods, but perhaps they are not in the dynamic in which I believe we should all be moving forward.

I will now refer to four issues related to the usual dynamics of the university, which, if properly addressed, can contribute to deepening this perspective of a committed and supportive university. The first of these, for example, is to better integrate university knowledge with more popular knowledge, with more lay, more traditional knowledge. Here I align myself with Sousa Santos; that is to say, that university knowledge must be *pluriversity* knowledge, it must try to push the frontiers between the university and its environment. Service-learning, solidarity education, are already along these lines of breaking down these frontiers, of trying to confront academic knowledge with popular knowledge, of trying to integrate popular knowledge within academia. I believe that we are not doing this sufficiently in the universities. We still have a very academic view and a certain way of understanding science in universities, and sometimes we ignore the contributions that come from the community. I believe that service-learning is a very clear example that does not overlook this and that is why it has an important value, because today it is difficult to fully understand the world on our own and to seek the dignity of everyone from a partial perspective such as the one that science has developed in our universities, in the western world and sometimes in the world that is only developed in the economic sense.

*Cuando se está formando un diplomado en Química, en Medicina -no hace falta que sea en Filosofía o en Ciencias Sociales-, cuando se está formando cualquier profesional, se está formando un profesional que debe comprometerse con una sociedad a la que debe aportar mejora, calidad, y para hacer eso es importante tener clara esa visión de compromiso.*

Secondly, I think that when we talk about this type of approach it is important to further reflect on the following: when can a university be called a *university*? Are all universities truly universities? Probably some are institutions that train future graduates, but are they universities? That is, do all institutions see the university as

a space for participation, for communication, for dialogue, for the participation in public debate on socially and ethically controversial issues? I believe that not all universities are universities and it is important to identify them because that is the way in which the University contributes and gives back to society. It is not that it gives back just because it has received, but because its mission is to contribute to train future professionals, future social leaders in the business world, in the media, in the unions, in politics. An important part of these social leaders must have started their university studies; therefore, when we are training a future graduate in Chemistry, in Medicine—it does not have to be in Philosophy or in Social Sciences—, when we are training any kind of professional, we are training a professional who must be engaged with a society to which he or she must bring improve-

ment and quality, and to do this it is important to have a clear vision of engagement. Engagement today should not only be considered in terms of trying to contribute to covering deficits. Whenever we speak of engagement or about solidarity, we always think of the disadvantaged person or group, the one who suffers from a deficit, who lacks something. And it is not only about that. It is not about adopting attitudes and practices of mere compassion and charity. It is about building an inclusive society, in which all of us—with or without deficits—feel we are equal members, despite our differences, and can access and enjoy the rights of a democratic and critical citizenship. This involves values of commitment, of linkage, of relationship. We understand that precisely for this reason, only those universities that look at what they are doing in a certain way and try to design teaching policies also in a certain way, are the ones that can contribute more to this idea of a committed and

*Service-learning greatly fosters citizenship and ethical learning of future graduates because it combines academic learning with service provision, thus contributing to the construction of an engaged and solidary professional identity, and that is why we strongly believe in it.*

supportive university, and to achieve this, progress can be made through several ways. For example, the curricular contents that we offer in our degree programmes: these contents may or may not include ethically controversial topics. We can avoid them or we can introduce them; we do not need to create new courses, we need to think in

terms of bringing conflicts into the classroom. Conflicts not only in the world of science and technology, but above all conflicts that have social and ethical implications. This is a way of working from your own courses of study with a social and ethical perspective. It is not necessary to take a course in ethics or to think only in social studies or humanities, but to contribute so that, for example, those who are being trained as engineers are able to understand that at the same time they are also being trained in ethical issues and citizenship. Service-learning greatly fosters citizenship and ethical learning of future graduates because it combines academic learning with service provision, thus contributing to the construction of an engaged and solidary professional identity, and that is why we strongly believe in it.

The third important question for universities when we consider these issues is to analyse the kind of relationships between students and faculty members. Are they relationships of respect? Are they relationships that are really open and demanding? Are they relationships that can allow us to defend values, for example, of justice? Are we really transparent and fair when it comes to evaluations? Do we recognize the rights and duties of students?

This question, which might seem far from the idea of commitment and solidarity, generates a climate and creates a living and learning space in the university that makes it easier for people to learn that the value of commitment and the value of solidarity are important.

The fourth dimension refers to community engagement, and here service-learning—I am not going to reveal anything new to the people who are listening—is one of the teaching and learning strategies that can perhaps help the most in building this training of an engaged student, provided that two or three conditions are met, two for sure. The first: it must be an academically formal learning process in accordance with the curricula of each degree programme. That is to say, that it should not be exclusively voluntary service, but that it should involve the contents of a degree programme, because it is a way of creating a double identity in a university student when he or she leaves the university. Double, but at the same time traversed: professional training with citizenship training. To accomplish this, they have to be together. Social engagement does not consist of doing “good deeds” on the weekend, but rather it is integrated into the way of exercising one’s profession. The second condition is that it must be an activity that obviously provides a service to the community. Therefore, the community must actively intervene to identify what those needs are. I do not know if it happens to others, but in our city, we have had many people working in certain neighbourhoods while there were other neighbourhoods with more needs. That is to say, we have to establish a dialogue between university knowledge and social needs. This is perhaps fundamental.

*When a student goes through a service-learning experience, their levels of engagement, solidarity and their way of thinking about themselves and their place in the world changes.*

At the University of Barcelona, over the last 10 or 15 years, since the first developments on service-learning made by Josep María Puig and within our research group GREM, many of us have

followed this path and we sincerely believe—I have seen it in my students—that really when a student goes through a service-learning experience, their levels of engagement, solidarity and their way of thinking about themselves and their place in the world changes. And this—which is very easy to say—is not so easy to design and even less so in the university. Therefore, we fully support the proposal of a committed and supportive education in the University, but so that the spaces of the University really live these values, not because it is declared in the Magna Carta or in the statutes of the universities. It is very easy to declare the importance of this issue, but it is not so easy to propose concrete actions, and I think what helps somewhat at this time is that we have a whole framework of sustainable development goals. Sustainability is nowadays something that everyone accepts and

that can hardly be rejected, although there are always people ready to do anything. And I believe that the University must try to contribute in this area. “To contribute” through teaching and student policies that are based on criteria of equity and attention to diversity, promoting public debate and advocacy on issues that are important for humanity, for example, the importance of pre-primary education and post-compulsory education in countries, integrating controversial and ethical issues into the curriculum and the educational contents, fostering contexts of coexistence that are characterized precisely by the values of participatory democracy and active citizenship, or through academic proposals such as service-learning that allow for greater engagement with the community. I believe that this *Uniservitate* initiative is very important and the universities that have been following for some time the movement initiated by Nieves Tapia, María Rosa Tapia and all the people who continue in institutions such as the ones here today are very satisfied to be able to continue having meetings like this one.



### Bojana Culum

*University of Rijeka (Croatia); TEFCE/CEE Service-learning Network; Uniservitate Academic Sounding Board. She is an Associate Professor at the University of Rijeka (Croatia), Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education, and serves as a member of the National Council for Youth Work, appointed by the Croatian Government. She is a member of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education and has been engaged in several EU funded projects focused on service-learning development in the EU.*

## Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education

There are many different discourses that we can take from this point onwards to discuss the importance of University Community Engagement in our complex contemporary society. I decided to use Picasso's quote, “The world today doesn't make sense, so why should I paint pictures that do?”—with which I could agree and disagree at the same time. It is true that our contemporary society is complex, at a certain point it does not make sense. There are mounting problems that our planet and our society face each day. On the other hand, within just the next few years, by 2025, the world will have approximately

300 million students at universities worldwide, and we ought to prepare them for such a society and a planet that we are leaving in their hands.

However, I would like to address some issues that we need to examine about what is going on inside of academia. In this context, I want and need to be particularly critical towards something that I would call “the gamification of academic excellence.” That seems to be the leitmotif of contemporary academia: playing profoundly serious poker game through rankings, benchmarking, performing, competing, assessing, excellence exercises, scoring, naming, and shaming and obviously asking the questions “Who is roaring? Who is the king over there?” All of us have been playing this kind of game for a long time but, in its best scenario, this game is focused on matters of fact, while matters of concern remain marginalized. I think that we can all agree that when you want to deal with concerns, you do it in a way that is very different from what the architecture of facts asks you to. If our universities are divorced from their capacity to really engage in matters of real concern in their communities and incite positive changes in the quality of life, they certainly are—and should be—open to the criticism of being socially irrelevant.

*Within just the next few years, by 2025, the world will have approximately 300 million students at universities worldwide, and we ought to prepare them for such a society and a planet that we are leaving in their hands.*

I do not think that our universities have, figuratively speaking, run out of steam. I think that we have to find ways for our universities to be socially active and responsible institutional neighbours. We have to find ways to sus-

tain our university’s engagement in those spheres of communities in which we do not buy or sell but in which we talk with our neighbours about the benefits for our communities, as Benjamin Barber put it so nicely, “And when you talk to someone, how can you measure it?” To lean on Picasso’s opening saying, measuring community engagement does not make sense and yet most of the attempts done so far to capture the benefits of community engagement have been measuring-oriented and they have been trying to calculate various aspects of community engagement with endless numerical indicators. However, I think that community engagement is resistant to being measured and most of those attempts to externally assess community engagement have had limited success and uptake.

To begin with, the university is not a homogeneous ideal type institution; its multifaceted performance cannot be easily steered centrally and reduced to a single score. Furthermore, no university that really strives to be engaged deserves to be externally assessed

by the one-size-fits-all approach, since community engagement is as rich and diverse as the historical, political, social, civic, and cultural roots that have given rise to regions, nations, and continents and to the formation of universities and higher education systems across the globe. This means that community engagement is always context-specific with a range of its objectives, activities, outcomes, and stakeholders and all of them are conceptualized differently internationally, in different academic disciplines, and within universities themselves. So measuring is simply not an option. Comparing community engagement performance between universities using quantitative benchmarks is unlikely to hold much value. Measuring community engagement in such a way simply leaves behind so many uncharted, unseen, unheard and nuanced layers of contributions of all kinds that engaged universities bring to their communities.

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While there are universities across the globe that I am sure have already invested years—and some of them even decades—into institutionalizing their own community engagement, I think we still have to be honest and acknowledge that the pulse of community engagement in many universities and in many different countries still

depends on the enthusiasm of individual academics. This is particularly the case still for European higher education. Therefore, the question is now how to empower universities for such a leap that would actually enable a shift from community engagement being an element of individual academic agency into one of institutional agency. On that crossroad, following that question with a certain group of colleagues, I embarked on the TEFCE project and passionately engaged in creating a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education that I want to just briefly present, as we do believe in our team that TEFCE Toolbox has the power to translate those individual academic practices of engagement and their own agency into an institutional narrative on engaged academic pillars and universities itself.

Unlike previous tools and attempts of measuring and capturing University Community Engagement, the TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education is an institutional self-reflection framework, which means that it supports or at least it is trying to support community engagement without using any metrics, ranking, benchmarking

agenda or bureaucratic self-assessment questionnaires. It provides different sets of tools for universities and communities to identify community engagement practices at university and reflect upon their achievement as well as on the room for further improvement. This toolbox has been developed by the international expert team of the TEFCE Project but in an extensive and participatory dialogue and co-creation process involving over 170 participants from eight countries, which lasted more than 18 months. In addition, the TEFCE Toolbox is based on an in-depth review of over 200 articles and books on community engagement in higher education and even on analyses of 10 previous tools for assessing community engagement in higher education. The final version is the result of collecting practices from over 120 practitioners and discussions among 50 experts and representatives of both universities and their non-academic communities during piloting visits at four European Higher Education Institutions with diverse institutional profiles.

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The TEFCE Toolbox is anchored in four key principles. The first one is the authenticity of engagement because we do believe that this policy tool recognizes community engagement that provides communities with meaningful roles and tangible benefits. The second one is the empowerment of individuals because we do believe that this toolbox recognizes

different kinds of community engagement efforts and outcomes. The third one is focused on the bottom-up approach rather than the top-down steering because we do believe that this tool is participative, that is, it is based on the experience, stories, and individual narratives of engaged academics rather than on the best practices that usually get *cherry-picked* by the management team. Lastly, our approach promotes a learning journey for the universities rather than benchmarking. This tool actually results in a qualitative discovery of good practices across the university and in a critical reflection on strengths and areas of innovative improvement, all of which is achieved through a collaborative learning participatory process.

The toolbox is organized around seven dimensions of community engagement:

- ▶ teaching and learning
- ▶ research
- ▶ service and knowledge exchange

- ▶ students
- ▶ management focused on university openness and fostering a long-term partnership with various sectors in the community
- ▶ more policy-oriented management
- ▶ supportive peers

Following the collection of community engagement practices from individual academics, the TEFCE methodology and toolbox actually encourages highly participatory discussion that results in a coloured heat map with 5 levels indicating how each of the dimension is doing according to the five criteria: authenticity of engagement, range of societal needs addressed, diversity of communities engaged with, extent of institutional spread of community engagement and institutional sustainability of community engagement. Should you be interested in finding more information, I encourage you to visit the TEFCE website and to get in touch with our team.

As a final message, in relation to this new approach in capturing the essence of community engagement at universities, I would like to say that we truly believe, after almost two years of passionately working on developing this toolbox, that it has the potential to foster a learning journey for universities towards transformational forms of engagement rather than it being a measurement and ranking or benchmarking exercise. We do believe that we need more of such approaches in thinking and critically reflecting upon university community engagement, to push it beyond the margins of the Higher Education missions into the spotlight, where it deserves to be.

***Links of interest and complementary contents:***

[https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/bojana\\_culum\\_en.pdf](https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/bojana_culum_en.pdf)



## Carol Ma

*Carol Ma is an Associate Professor at the Singapore University of Social Science (SUSS). Furthermore, she is Head of the Gerontology Programme and Senior Fellow of Service-Learning & Community Engagement at the Centre for Experiential Learning. Throughout the past 15 years, she has acquired extensive experience as an academic advisor in SL programmes and training and research. She serves as Head of the Service-Learning Graduate Certificate Program at SUSS.*

When I think about the role of Higher Education, I also think of the role of University Social Responsibility. There are different dimensions, including economic, social, educational and environmental aspects. These can be integrated in our teaching, research, management, and projections to the society. I am sure the reason why we are all here is because we hope to create a social change. Through our university social actions, we can contribute to both the global and local community.

As we all know, the whole world nowadays is so complex. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we can think out of the boxes and think of the kind of actions we can do. How can we position ourselves in Higher Education? Can we contribute to human and social development in view of the uncertainty nowadays?

Higher Education Institutions play a critical role in creating educated and responsible citizens. This actually leads us to develop partnerships and even co-create knowledge and serve humanity, in the end, what we want is to build a sustainable community. Regarding our role, we have to reconsider that it is not just service, teaching and research. As faculty members, we are evaluated through service, teaching and research. Doing research even plays an important role in our appraisal or application for tenure track. I think it is time for the university to reconsider or reflect on how we can create engaged service, engaged teaching, and engaged research, which has nothing to do with counting how much research or how many 'A' grade journal papers faculty have done, but rather is concerned with doing more engaged work with the community together.

Engaged service includes how we can cultivate the Culture of Giving, promote service leadership, University Social Responsibility, and also lifelong learning. It does not mean that the ultimate goal is for our students to graduate from our university; but to consider how education can create opportunities for our students to serve and address the needs of the people in the rapid development of the society.

The next is engaged teaching. Nowadays, many students or working adults want to learn through bite-size courses, which offer them flexibility to learn. We are no longer just talking about the classroom setting, the pandemic actually changes our teaching style, and also creates a new normal for us to think about how to teach creatively. We should also emphasize more on applied learning, service-learning, problem-solving into pedagogy which can also address the needs of the society.

Lastly, engaged research is not just about purely doing research by ourselves, we should consider working closely with our community partners and develop community-based

*We should consider working closely with our community partners and develop community-based partnerships or applied research to co-create knowledge or propose solutions to different stakeholders.*

partnerships or applied research to co-create knowledge or propose solutions to different stakeholders.

The most important part of our education is to witness our young people, our students who are the future pil-

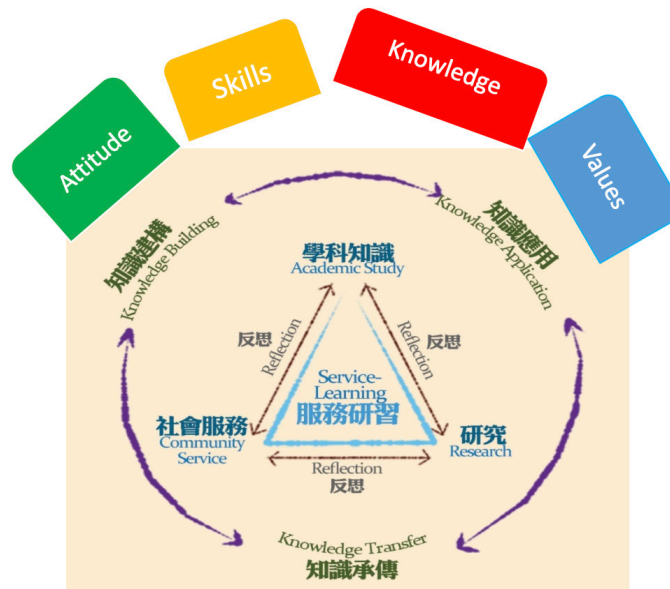
lars that can also contribute to the betterment of society. Therefore, our students are the most important in our education. However, according to Harry Lewis, the former Dean of Harvard College in his book *Excellence without a Soul*, "Universities have forgotten that the fundamental purpose of undergraduate education is to turn young people into adults who will take responsibility for society." I think we should give serious consideration to this, because we keep saying we need to have quality education, excellent education, then have we thought about whether we can have excellence with a soul and not without a soul? I work with a lot of institutions in Asia and we see education as character-building. Confucius considered that character-building is to learn to be human and this actually quite echoes what Harry Lewis said. Education is not just about serving ourselves, but also the family, the community, and the world.

However, the whole world is changing; there are many changes that we cannot foresee, many uncertainties. This year we all have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we do not know what is next. Therefore, we actually need to equip ourselves, to think of what we actually need in a new education. Jack Ma said:

If we do not change the way we teach, 30 years from now, we're going to be in trouble, the knowledge-based approach of '200 years ago' would 'fail our kids', who would never be able to compete with machines. Children should be taught 'soft skills' like independent thinking, values, and team-work. (World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, 2018).

Therefore, we need our Higher Education to work together, identify the needs, co-create knowledge, and engage with the community, which includes non-profit organizations, corporations, government, and all the individuals. We can educate our students to recognize the needs of the community, to understand and explore knowledge, to apply what they have learnt and to have knowledge exchanges with our community. Transferring knowledge/exchange is not only within institutions. We can transfer knowledge to the community and the community can also transfer knowledge to us. That is why community-based learning and participatory research are so important, in the end, what we want to do is to co-create knowledge. That is part of the knowledge-building process.

### SERVICE-LEARNING AS A HIGH IMPACT PEDAGOGY



Service-learning is actually a high impact pedagogy. If we think about it graphically, academic study, community service and research surround service-learning, which encompasses the concepts of teaching, service and research. In the outer part we have knowledge building, knowledge applications, and knowledge transfer. It is not unidirectional, we can continue to build knowledge and contribute to society. But we need students with a good attitude and skills like communication and leadership: they need to know how to communicate with the community and understand its issues. Otherwise, how would they have a common language and work with the community partners? Therefore, the importance of service-learning is not only serving, but also understanding how to work with the community.

Service-learning is a kind of reflection on service mindfulness and actions which can also create positive emotions. We always talk about mental health. If you have positive emotions, they can develop the foundation of your happiness because they result in

positive learning and then that translates into effective learning. In the end, we can also achieve self-fulfilment and, of course, service-learning also links into contextual learning and then also holistic learning. There exist different kinds of learning. There is a study carried out in the USA on how service-learning can create deep learning and then contribute to general, practical, and also personal skills. These are all interrelated; there is already a lot of research evidence to prove it, which show that service-learning could be a kind of high impact learning.

**Service - Learning High Impact Learning**

	Deep Learning	Gains: General	Gains: Personal	Gains: Practical
<i>First-Year</i>				
Learning Communities	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	+++	++	+++	+++
<i>Senior</i>				
Study Abroad	++	+	+	++
Student-Faculty Research	+++	++	++	++
Internships	++	++	++	++
Service Learning	+++	++	+++	+++
Senior Culminating Experience	+++	++	++	++

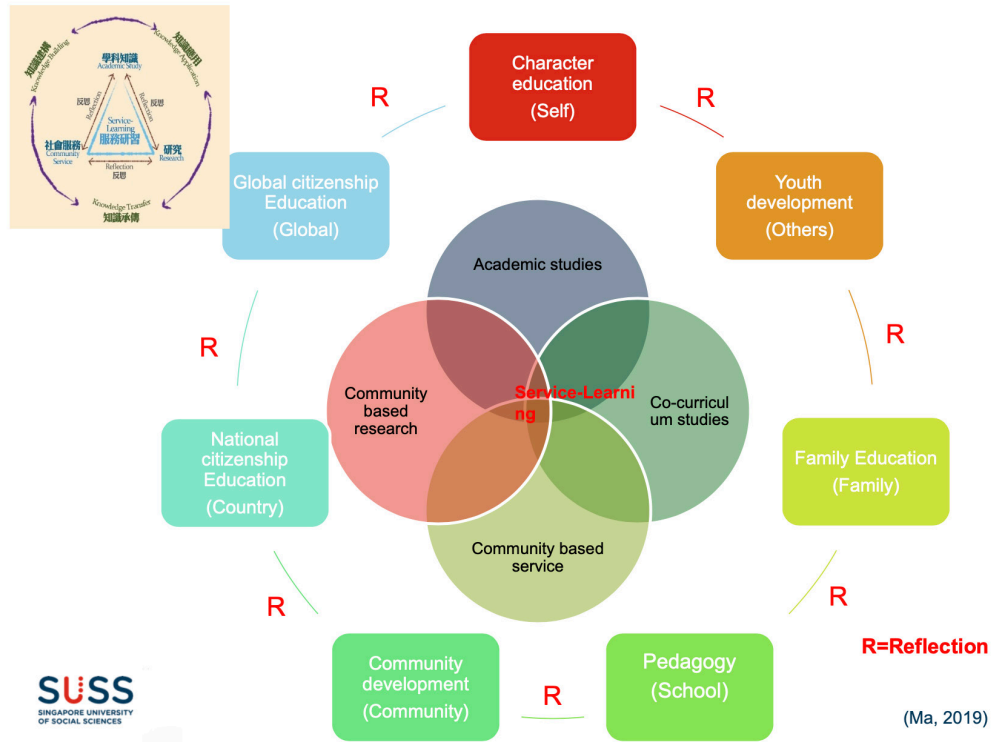
+ p<0.001, ++ p<0.001 & Unstd B > 0.10, +++ p<0.001 & Unstd B > 0.30

When we talk about the role of Higher Education, we need to think about the purpose, we need to think about why we need to have different pedagogies to engage with our students and also with the community. That is actually related to the self, others, family, school, community, country, and also the world. Previously, I mentioned that, when we think of our Higher Education, it is no longer just local but also global, from ourselves to the world. We always talk about global citizenship but we need to let our students know about the self, others, family, school, and community. If they do not know about this, how can they go global?

This process is not unidirectional. In fact, it is something we can continue to reflect on it and that is what the R stands for. What we need to do includes the curriculum design, academic studies, co-curriculum studies and also community-based service and research. Somehow, we need to have our faculty members understand the whole curriculum design if we want to showcase and address the community issues. Merging service-learning pedagogy in our curriculum is also one of the ways to show the role of University Social Responsibility.

Finally, I would like to quote one Chinese philosopher called Xunzi that said, "Tell me, and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." I hope all our educators

here can involve your students and also your community partners to co-create knowledge and co-design solutions for the community. I am sure we all can learn throughout the process.



In conclusion, I think we are all here today because we also have hearts to serve the community. It is not just because we are faculty members but because we want to educate our young people who can contribute to the society. Aristotle said, “Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.” I hope we all can be educated by our heart.

**Links of interest and complementary contents:**

[https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/carol\\_ma.pdf](https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/carol_ma.pdf)



## Daniel Stigliano

*Global Coordinator of the Scholas Chairs Programme, which brings together a network of public and private universities and 35 observer organizations from around the world that are focused on action-research to solve social problems. He is a professor at the University of Buenos Aires and at the Universidad Nacional del Oeste (Argentina), and a member of several academic bodies.*

### Scholas Chairs, University of Meaning

I am grateful for the possibility of being able to share with all of you today these initiatives called Scholas Chairs and University of Meaning, which we carry out within the framework of the Pontifical Scholas Occurrentes Foundation. For those of you who are not familiar with our work, I will say briefly that the Scholas Foundation was created by Pope Francis in 2013; fundamentally, it works with high-school youth and develops programmes of citizenship and construction of meaning. On that basis, it utilizes arts, sports and digital technology to be able to work on all these issues related to social engagement.

The first question that arises is “What are the Scholas Chairs?” The word *chair* immediately refers to a university. In reality, it is a network, a large network in which universities “that go forth” are intertwined. I say universities “that go forth” to quote Pope Francis’ call, in the document *Veritatis Gaudium*, dedicated to Catholic universities and extendable to secular universities. This network brings together universities “that go forth”—public, private, secular and of different religious denominations—all engaged with a “bold cultural revolution” based on listening to young people.

The second question is “What are chairs?” A *chair* is a networked point of reflection and action, where students, professors, researchers and society are enriched by the encounter with the other. So it is a network of universities, but we also think of a network *within* the University. Some of the speakers commented on the need for the research area, the teaching area and the community engagement or solidarity activities area to interconnect and overlap. It is also true—and we all know it—that this is much more difficult within a university—and the bigger, the more difficult—for the different schools and departments to work in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary way, communicating with each other and not working as separate compartments.

Who are the members of the Scholas Chairs network? There are currently 117 universities from 37 countries and from the 5 continents. We have also added Oceania, where the Catholic University of Australia is the only member. It is a network that, following the call for universality and the culture of encounter, brings together not only Catholic universities but also universities of all denominations, many of them secular and public.

The itinerary, the path, of the chairs began in 2016. We were fortunate that Nieves Tapia was also present representing CLAYSS because, in addition to these 117 universities, we have about 25 non-governmental organizations that we call *observer organizations* and CLAYSS is one of the key organizations in this work scheme. In that first congress held by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican, the first thing we worked on was to discover the meaning and purpose of this network of universities that wanted to work on service-learning and university social responsibility. So we devised a medium and long-term work plan, fundamentally, to work on an evaluation instrument for service-learning programmes in schools. What we did there was to link formal school education with the University. In fact, that meeting was called “University and School: a wall or a bridge.” Moreover, when this programme began to be built as a network of universities, there were four basic fundamental criteria that established the work of the Scholas Chairs.

The first of them is—as I said before—to be universities “that go forth.” The University runs the risk of creating a wall around itself and not getting in touch with what is happening outside. A university “that goes forth” is in contact with its community, with its region, with its country; it detects the problems experienced by the community, orients teaching and research,

*The University runs the risk of creating a wall around itself and not getting in touch with what is happening outside. A university “that goes forth” is in contact with its community*

engaging everyone, especially the students, in the solution of these problems.

The second solution to these problems is to develop interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. In this sense, we see ourselves in the network as universities that work in different fields of study and scientific and social disciplines. But we are not all engineers, doctors, philosophers or theologians. We are united by this desire to change society through the university, through research and solidarity work.

The third characteristic is to promote a true culture of encounter. That is why we work with different denominations, public and private universities, from different nations. This is also fundamental for any of the activities carried out by Scholas. No activity can be carried out if this heterogeneous presence is not assured in the working groups that are formed.

The third characteristic is to promote a true culture of encounter. That is why we work with different denominations, public and private universities, from different nations. This is also fundamental for any of the activities carried out by Scholas. No activity can be carried out if this heterogeneous presence is not assured in the working groups that are formed.

Finally, a basic criterion: networking. In fact, we are a network but we are aware of the fact that many networks do not work. They have a beautiful website but there is no interaction among professors, researchers. In this case, what we want to build is a criterion of cooperation and collaboration. We do not want competition in the production of knowledge; we want it to be somewhat different from what happens in a traditional university. For the time being, in Scholas we are working with the youths that participate in citizenship building programmes where they express their problems and the ones they see in their communities. Over time, we have been gathering this information and, based on the problems that young people detect in society, we propose to the universities that have Scholas Chairs that they work and orient their teaching and research along three axes: the first one is to educate for humanism in solidarity, everything that has to do with educational innovation; the second one has to do with the *Laudato si* axis, which leads us to integral ecology, environmental and social sustainability; and the third one is the interreligious and intercultural dialogue for sustainable peace. For example, the axis of interreligious dialogue can emerge in the thinking of the youths, who are very concerned about the stereotypes of them created by the beliefs and the look of society. The discrimination, the lack of social integration, bullying, cyberbullying and peer violence that they suffer. This led us to set up a research axis in which all these problems are considered for the production of knowledge in the universities we work with.

What concrete actions do we carry out? The first one arose in 2016, in that first congress, and it is the University's expert assistance for service-learning and social responsibility projects; I put those projects that do not quite meet the characteristics of service-learning but that we accompany anyway under the category "social responsibility." The University must be able to give expert advice to these projects, help them to grow as such and to be successfully implemented. Secondly, the creation of action-research groups of researchers and professors from different universities in the network. A third didactic approach has to do with the development of specific training (including postgraduate courses) to work on all these issues included in the research agenda of the chairs. The fourth action is to try to influence public policies and the society in which the universities are inserted so that these productions that arise from the concerns of the youths and the work of professors, researchers and students can influence public policies and generate concrete changes at the local and regional level for a better country.

I also wanted to tell you that if you want to get to know some of the projects that are carried out in the universities with Scholas Chairs in more detail, we have an online Scientific Journal called *Cultori del Incontro*. The link is <https://cultoridelincontro.org/es/informacion/> but if you enter "Cultori del Incontro" in the Google search engine, the journal appears immediately. There you can find many of the published experiences and more

information about the programme. For us, a paper cannot remain a literature review, an opinion, a statistic, a bar graph or a pie chart representing numbers from a survey. It has to reflect a real project connected to society, solve a problem and present an experience of this action-research. A concrete experience carried out by and with human beings to improve a social problem. This is a distinctive feature of our papers.

Last June 5th, Pope Francis created the University of Meaning, within the framework of the Scholas Foundation community. This is a public, free, global, intergenerational (dedicated to people of all ages), interreligious and multicultural university with formal head-

*A concrete experience carried out by and with human beings to improve a social problem. This is a distinctive feature of our papers.*

quarters in Vatican City that will operate through micro campuses distributed in confessional, public and private universities in the five continents. It is under construction at the moment and will begin

to develop its first activities next year. Basically, we are at the stage of generating the micro campuses, which will certainly operate in universities that already have a Scholas Chair. But, what is the fundamental difference between a Scholas Chair and a micro campus of the University of Meaning? In the Scholas Chair, teaching, research, action and fieldwork activities on all these social problems detected by the youths are carried out. The University of Meaning is not going to have degree courses. It will carry out training programmes for students within the university—both on-site and online modalities will be available—but it will also seek the exchange among students from different universities of the network in order to implement a service-learning and university social responsibility programme and go through an experience that creates meaning in their lives and provides them with a different view of their future life as university professionals. Hence, the name “University of Meaning”: building meaning for life, building meaning for the profession.

So, what is the fundamental difference? The University of Meaning will award course credits to the solidarity activity that students carry out at their own university. Therefore, these micro campuses will have to have the approval of the Rectorate, of the Higher Council of each university, to be able to award credits to those curricular contents of the solidarity activity; and not only for their students but also for possible exchange students.

This is the experience we are embarked on at the moment, which arises from this great network that we have been building and discovering along the way. We believe it still has much more to offer. As Nieves, María Rosa and I say, it also has the possibility of interacting with you and with all the experiences you are carrying out. I thank you very much for this

opportunity and I hope we can continue to be in contact and exchange ideas. Thank you very much.

**Links of interest and complementary contents:**

[https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/daniel\\_stigliano\\_en.pptx](https://publications.uniservitate.org/en/proceedings/daniel_stigliano_en.pptx)



**Judith Pete**

*Dr. Judith Pete is a Professor at Tangaza University College (TUC), in Nairobi, Kenya, where she heads the Community Engagement programme. She has served in Academic, Regional, Non-Governmental and Faith-Based Organizations in different Managerial and Leadership Capacities since 2005.*

*She currently coordinates the Service-Learning Regional Hub for Africa. She has acquired extensive experience as a University Educator, as well in Community Development and Research.*

Thank you very much, Daniel, for a wonderful presentation that has touched on the core issues. If we really want to have a university that really transforms the lives and future of the students, we need to involve tools that promote active listening and networking. The aspect of collaborative ministry has come up very strongly in your presentation and I would really like to uphold the fact that we do not need to operate as competitors but as collaborators. That is the way to go for a universal and integral education in CHEIs. Thank you very much for that contribution.

I would like to thank all the speakers for the wonderful and very insightful presentations. You have provided beautiful reflections geared towards involvement and integral education, which really uphold the pillars of service-learning. I will now give a very brief conclusion and go straight to answer the question that brings us together: why we need a supportive and committed Higher Education today. The reasons are: first, because the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we used to do things. We are living in the new normal now so we have to understand that there are complex realities that call for spiritual and strategic approaches to education aimed at providing solutions to specific problems; second, because we are living in a world where there are complex and changing problems that also call for reflective measures.

We need to reflect, not to react. We need to proact, and proaction here causes us to talk about restructuring the mission and identity of the university. What is the purpose of our University? Are we fulfilling the real mission and vision of these Higher Education Institutions?

The complexity of the world today calls for relevant key educational principles that will help us transform society. We are involving and engaging all the stakeholders: the students, the community and action-oriented researchers are at the centre.

Authentic engagement is something that stood out in all the presentations and I guess this could be one of the pillars that we need to embrace in our Higher Education Institutions. Empowering individuals so that we can have sustainable and long-lasting solutions to problems was another pillar that was emphasized strongly. I agree with the presenters in that the bottom-up strategy of solving problems, which involves understanding the reality on the ground by doing social or economic analysis and reflecting on it before providing a solution, will help us have a committed and supportive Higher Education that will respond to the concurrent problems that we are currently facing.

We also saw the aspects of engagement, solidarity and excellence, which are all geared towards corporate social responsibility and, therefore, the aspect of engaging core universities with their communities is really appealing. Removing the barriers of what academic excellence provides and linking it to how the community can be engaged and how students can be trained to become responsible adults were also very interesting topics that came up in our discussion.

In conclusion, we realize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach in community engagement. We need to be flexible, to engage, to reflect and to be inclusive in all we undertake. Thank you very much, friends.

We thank Dr. Judith Pete, Director of the Service-Learning Regional Hub for Africa, for her excellent moderation of this panel.

***Links of interest and complementary contents:***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Og\\_LPLUIrKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Og_LPLUIrKg)



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.

**“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.

*Uniservitate is an initiative led by Porticus, with the general coordination of the Latin American Center for Service-learning (CLAYSS)*

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