

Solidarity Service-learning: cultivating shared wisdom

Candelaria Ferrara

University–Community Engagement and Development Partnerships Conference

University of Makeni & University of Sierra Leone

October 20th, 2025

Latin American Centre for Solidarity Service-Learning

Our Mission

To contribute to the growth of a fraternal and participative culture through the development of solidarity service-learning projects.

Buenos Aires,
Argentina
August 2025



When we think of the horses that a veterinary school studies, what image comes to mind?



Solidarity, learning and scientific research.

Clinics for "cartoneros" or "carretoneros" horses and research on equine health in urban contexts of extreme poverty. Veterinary Schools in Argentina and Chile.



Universidad
Nacional de
Rosario



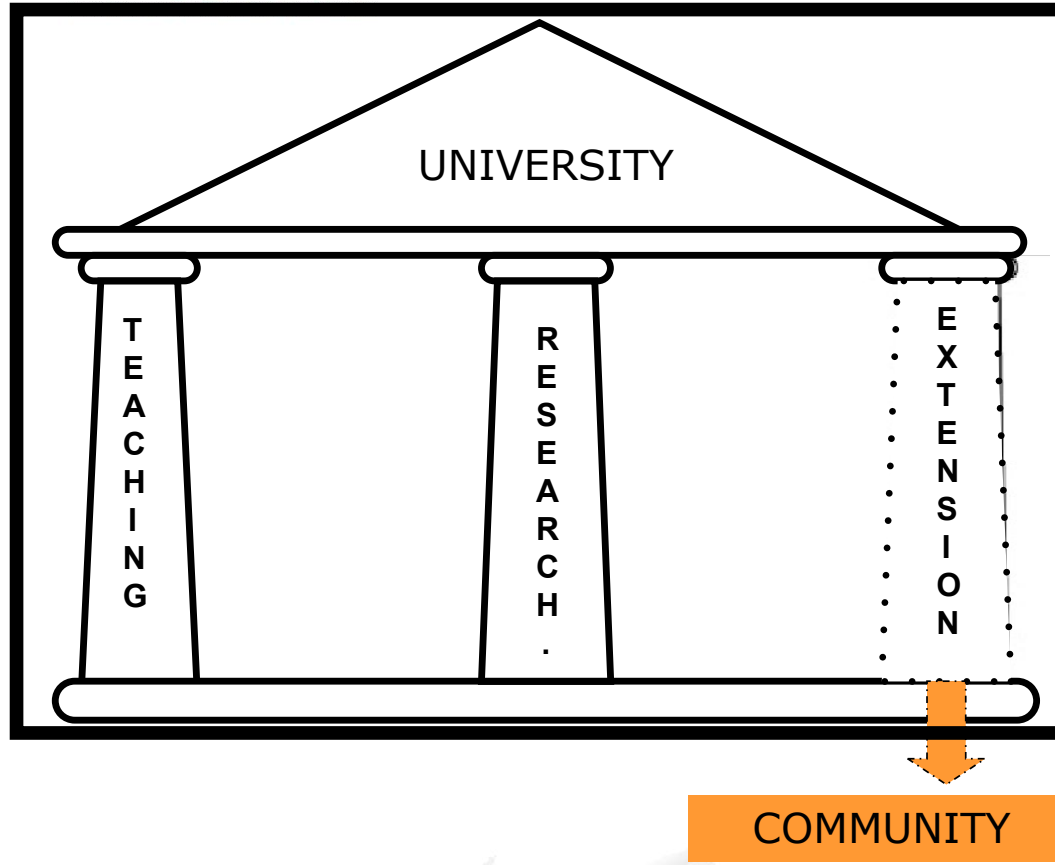
Universidad Austral, Valdivia



+
Universidad
Católica de Temuco

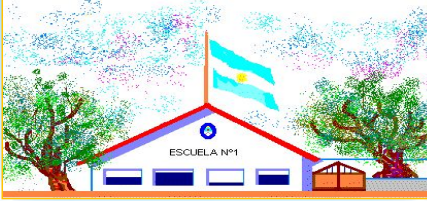
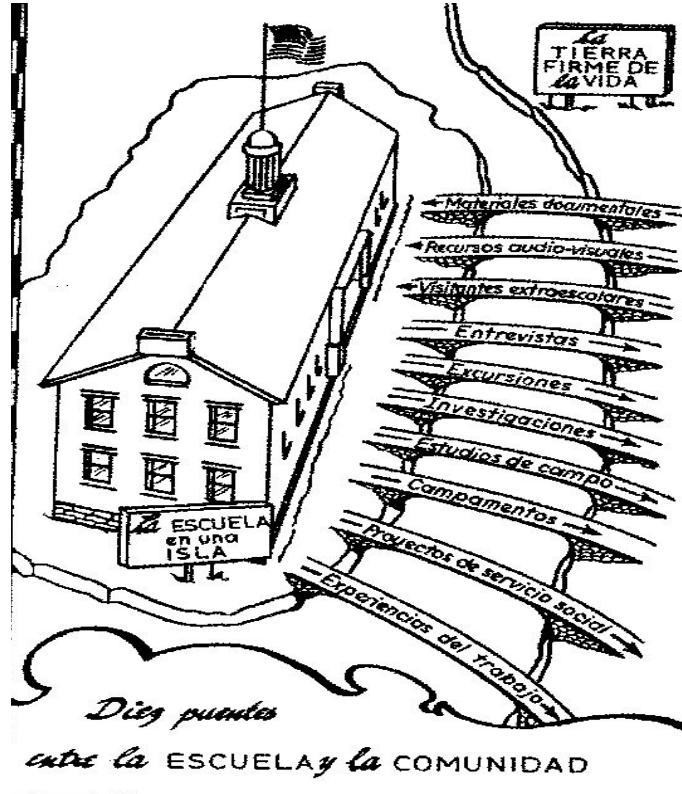
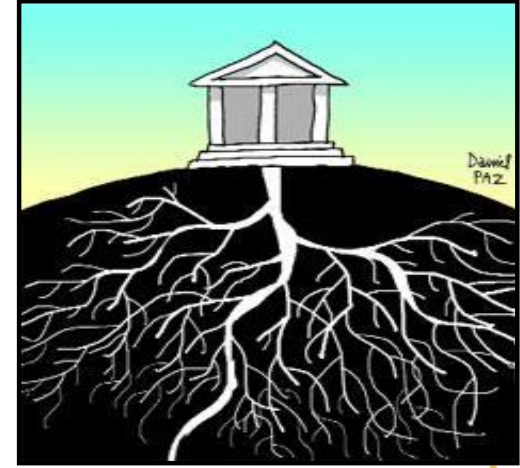


The traditional “ivory tower”



- “The temple of knowledge”.
- Science as “neutral”, end in itself.
- “Science Push”=Hiper specialization.
- “Three pillars”:
Extension/ Outreach= lectures, concerts and philanthropy.

What kind of link to the community?



“Service-learning and community engagement smooth the walls between the classroom and the community, challenge students' preconceptions, and connect them to broader systems, processes, and experiences beyond their own experience..”

UNESCO, 2021 :52

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en>
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391912>



The fabric of the educational village



A "virtuous circle" of academic life and social commitment



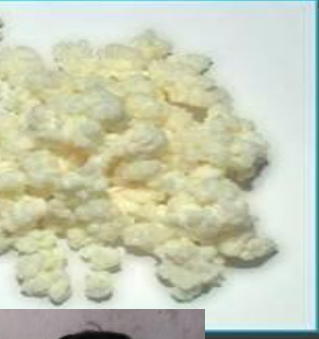
From research to the classroom, from the classroom to the community, and from the community... back to the classroom.



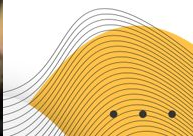
Interdisciplinary research: Impact of kefir on children's health



New subject: Anthropology of Food



to community kitchens



The "virtuous circle" of service and learning

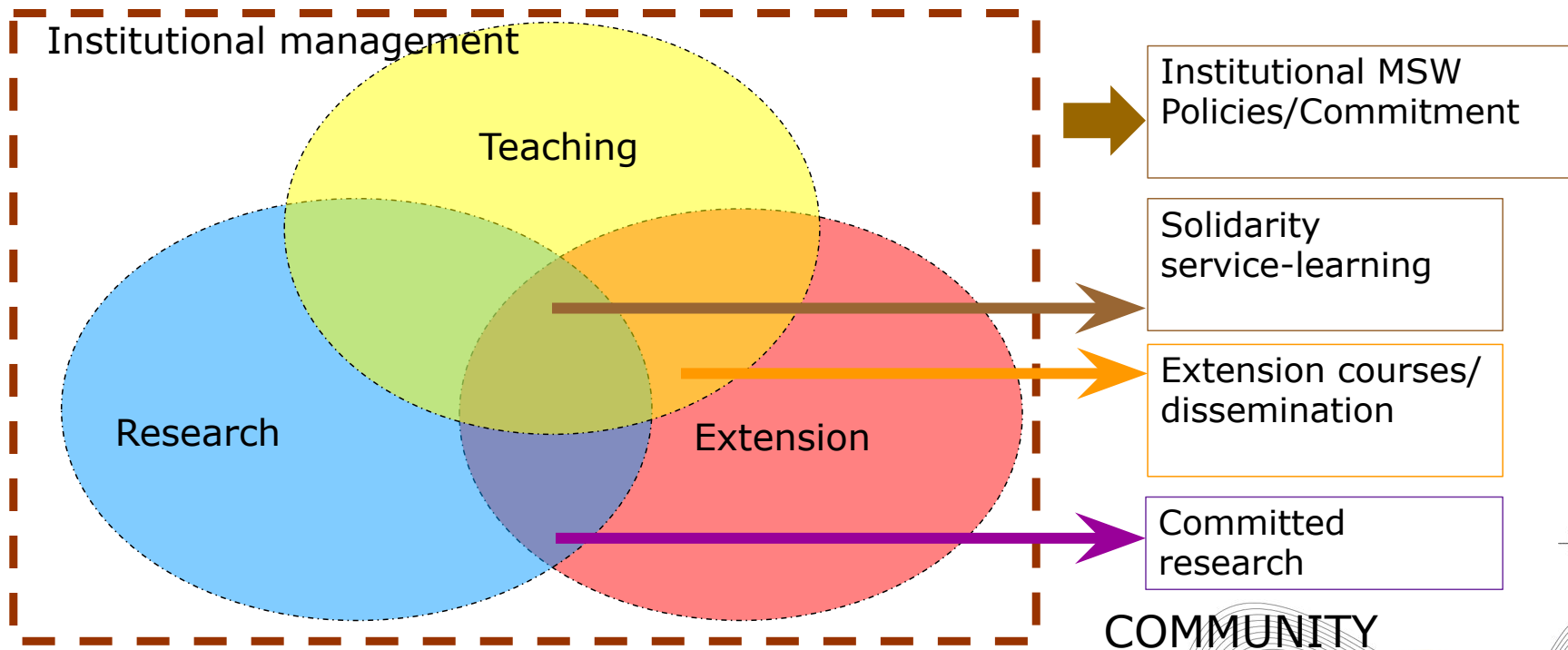
improve the quality of the service offered

Knowledge
development

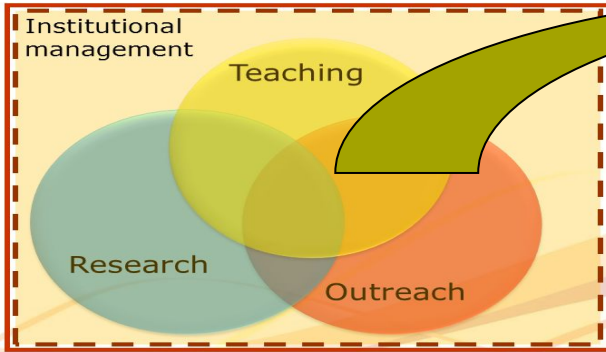
Solidarity
Service

Stimulates new research questions and new knowledge
production

Towards an articulating model of the "pillars": the social mission in teaching and research



The University of Care



- New knowledge, new research questions.
- New teaching styles.
- Curriculum renovation.
- "University reform"

Offer of knowledge, human and economic resources

- Dialogue with popular and ancestral knowledge.
- Community becomes a learning space.
- Knowledge co-production
- Quality of life improvements, social change.

COMMUNITY

- Collecting and distributing clothes and food for a rural population is a **solidarity activity**.
- Designing water purifiers on the computer for practical work is **learning**.
- Designing and producing water purification devices for a rural population, and training the population in their installation and maintenance, is **solidarity service-learning**.

Solidarity Service-Learning (SSL) AYSS in Spanish



Assam Don Bosco University, India: nanotechnology for village water purification

Quality Service-Learning



- **Learning contents intentionally linked to social activities.** Curriculum content, development of skills for citizenship and work, reflection and research.

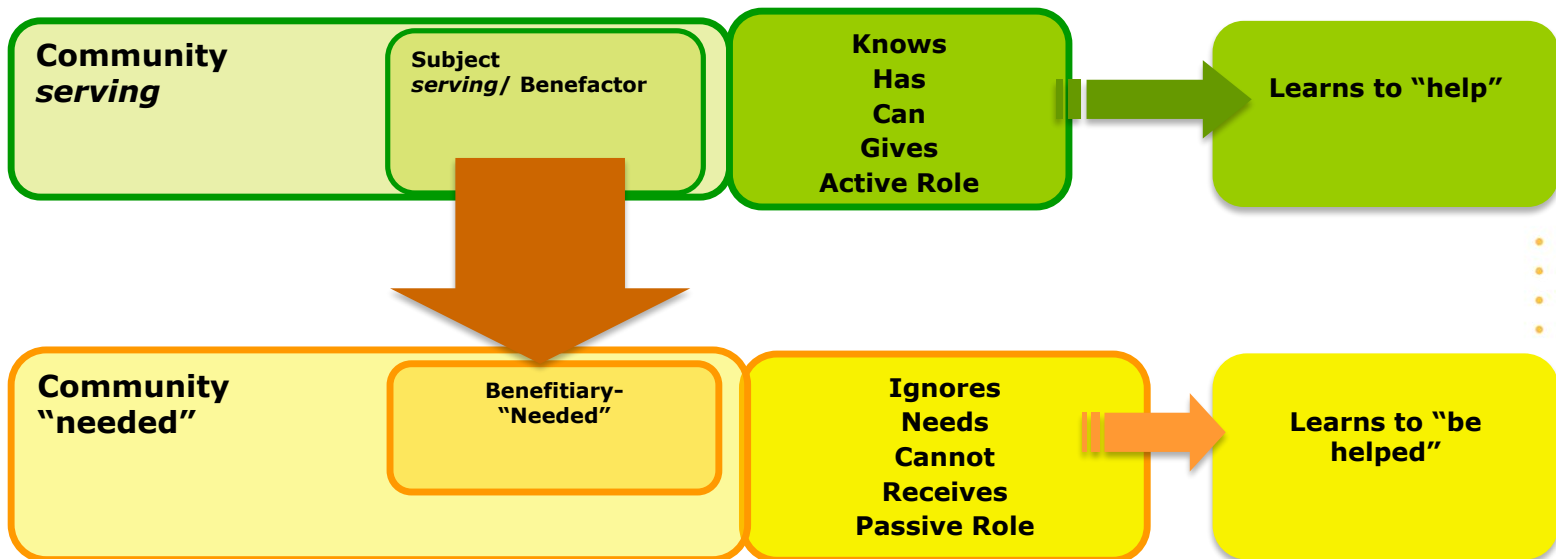


- **Solidarity Activity.** Real, verifiable solidarity project, working *with* the community, not only for it.

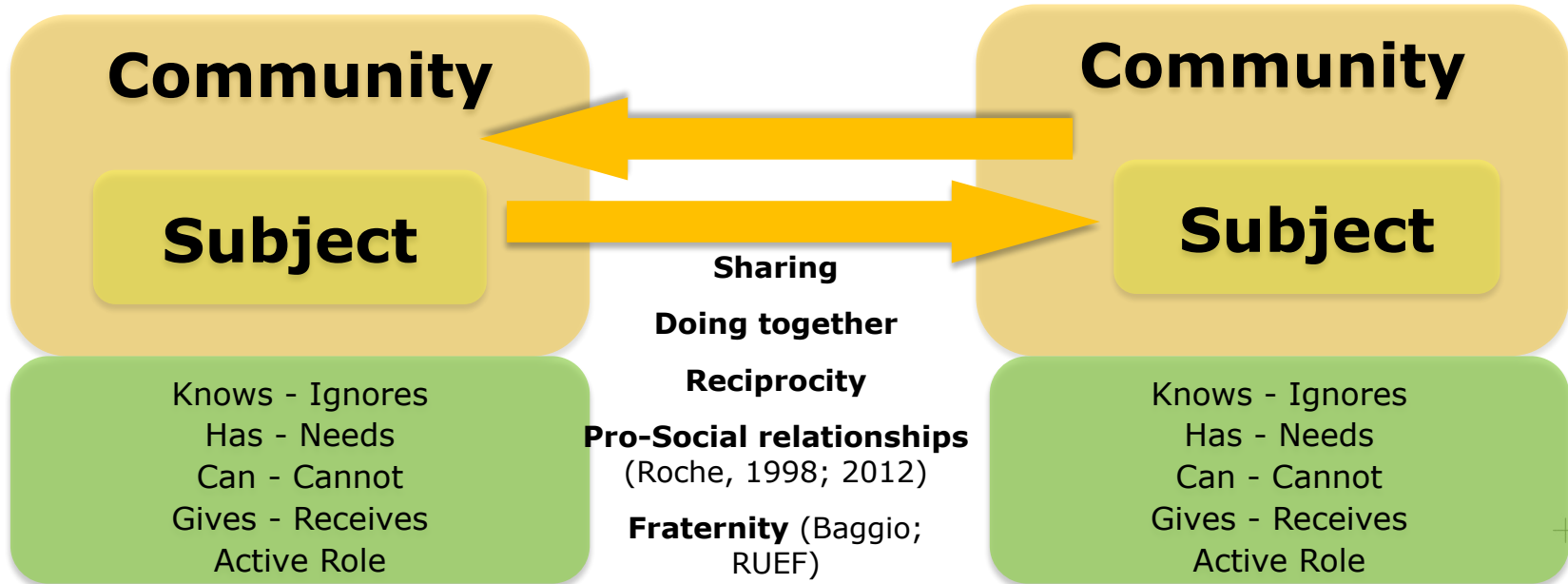


- **Students' active engagement and leadership** in all the stages of the project (from planification to evaluation). Experiential learning. Spiritual development.

Solidaridad/Service: The traditional model



Solidaridad/Service: The "horizontal" model



A "horizontal" solidarity that listens to and learns from the community



Technology transfer for the use of solar energy in isolated rural communities in the Andean region. Community laundry facility powered by solar energy to respect the community's indigenous culture and allow women to continue washing clothes together.

Natural Resources and Environmental Engineering, Bachelor's Degree in Renewable Energy, Faculty of Exact Sciences, National University of Salta, Argentina



Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU)

The SESU provides scholarly expertise and research assistance to organisations working in areas that are central to ACU's mission and ethos as a Catholic university. Through the facilitation of partner-initiated research projects, we can help inform, shape, evaluate and develop your programs and services.

The Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU) is a product of our organisational culture – a culture deeply engaged in the wider community. At ACU, we listen to our partners and act in response to their needs.

News and events

News



Call for community-initiated research projects

5 February

ACU calls for research project proposals that could make a positive social impact to people facing disadvantage or marginalisation.

News



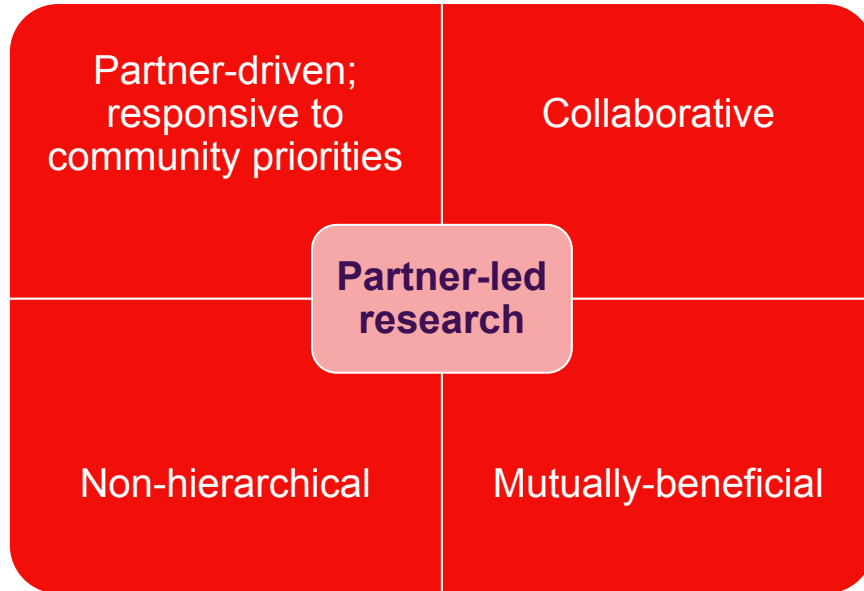
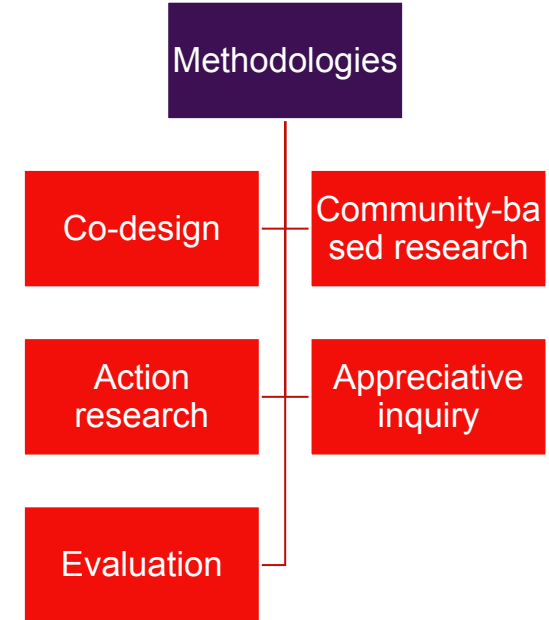
Pandemic stress not over for asylum seekers and refugees

19 December

ACU study of asylum seekers and refugees in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic found that their experiences intensified domestic partner violence and financial stress.



Dismantling the silos



Partners Training in SL in UC Portuguesa



Partners panel at the University of Deusto Conference on SL



Community partners participation in projects and evaluation - UC Argentina



EVALUACIÓN Y PARTICIPACIÓN EN LA FORMACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA SOCIALMENTE COMPROMETIDA. CUANDO TODOS APRENDEMOS.

por *Andrés Peregalli*

DIME CÓMO EVALÚAS Y TE DIRÉ QUÉ TIPO DE EDUCACIÓN PROMUEVES

Inmersos en un mundo complejo que valora las mediciones y sus virtudes, muchas veces de modo desmedido, vivimos tensionados por la necesidad de aprehender y comprender los aprendizajes que suceden en individuos, colectivos e instituciones.

En ese marco las evidencias que resultan de un dispositivo de evaluación siempre serán un *proxy*,



<https://evalparticipativa.net/2024/03/02/evaluacion-y-participacion-en-la-formacion-universitaria-socialmente-comprometida-cuando-todos-aprendemos/>

Field visit. UCChile



Occupational Therapy
Project.
Closing activity:
Evaluation.



From the university to the community.
From the community to the university:

"Mirror of Hope"

Tangaza University in Nairobi, Kenya.

The NGO was founded by an Arts graduate in Sustainable Human Development at Tangaza University's Institute for Social Transformation.

Thomas' experience of the value of his own education so that today there is a University-Community partnership and collaboration



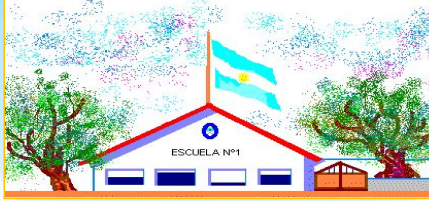
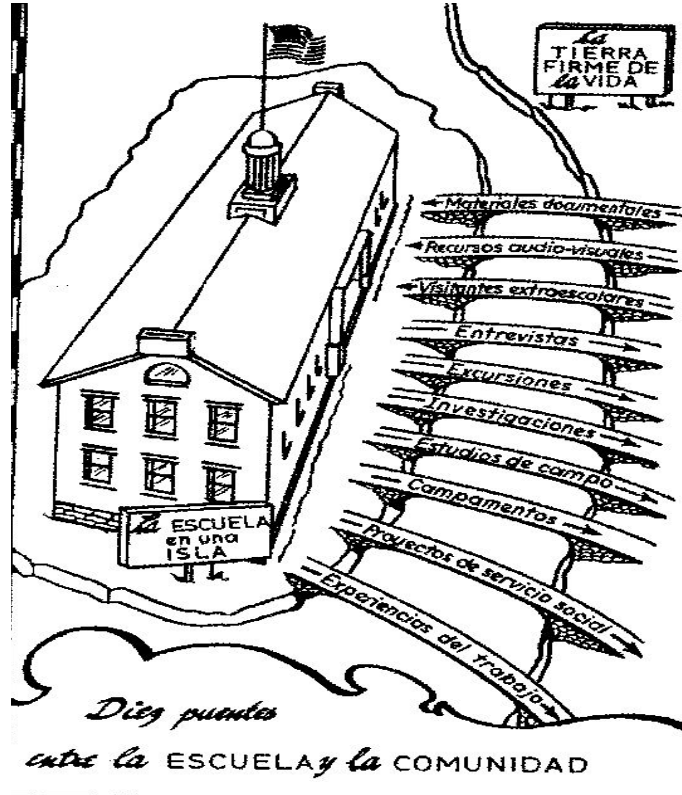
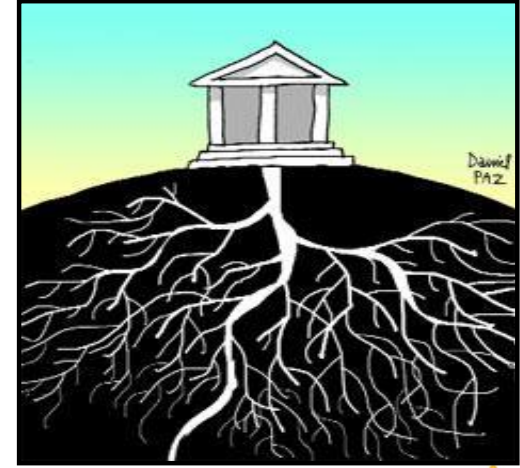
Programs:

- School Sponsorship
- School Holidays
- Women's Empowerment
- Personal Development of Sponsored Students
- Computing and Music
- Lending Communities

"My undergraduate studies at TU gave me ideas to put what I knew into action to change the society around me. I was conscious of teaching minds, touching hearts and transforming lives at TU. That was the basis of service-learning, learning so that I could put my skills into practice in society and make a difference to transform society little by little."

Thomas Nyawir

What kind of university do we want to be for our time?



Let's cultivate shared wisdom





Georgetown University
University of Notre Dame
Loyola University Chicago
DePaul University
Boston College
Aquinas College
St. Thomas University

USA & Canada:

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities - ACCU

CESPN

Associates:

IFCU
ODUCAL
AUSJAL
LUMSA
UC Valencia
IALU

Latin America and the Caribbean:

PUC Chile (CH)
PU Javeriana (CO)
PUC Ecuador (EC)
PUC Argentina (AR)
UC Pernambuco (BR)

Universidad San Jorge (Spain)
Universidad Comillas (Spain)

W Europe - S:

U Deusto (ES)
St. Mary U (UK)
UC Sacro Cuore (IT)
UC Portuguesa (PT)

W Europe - N:

KU Leuven (BL)
KUL Association (BL)
U Namur (BL)
UC Lille (FR)

CEE & MENA:

KU Eichstätt (DE)
JP II CU Lublin (PL)
UCU Lviv (UA)
Bethlehem U (PS)

UC Louvain (Belgium)

LUCA School of Arts

Artevelde University of Applied Sciences

KDG University of Applied Sciences and Arts

UC Leuven-Limburg

Odisee

Thomas More

VIVES University of Applied Sciences

Asia & Oceania:

De la Salle U (PH)
Assam Don Bosco U (IN)
Fu Jen CU (TW)
Australian CU (AU)

Africa:

Tangaza U (KE)
Mwenge CU (TZ)
U Kisubi (UG)
UCAC Yaoundé (CM)
Loyola U (CD)

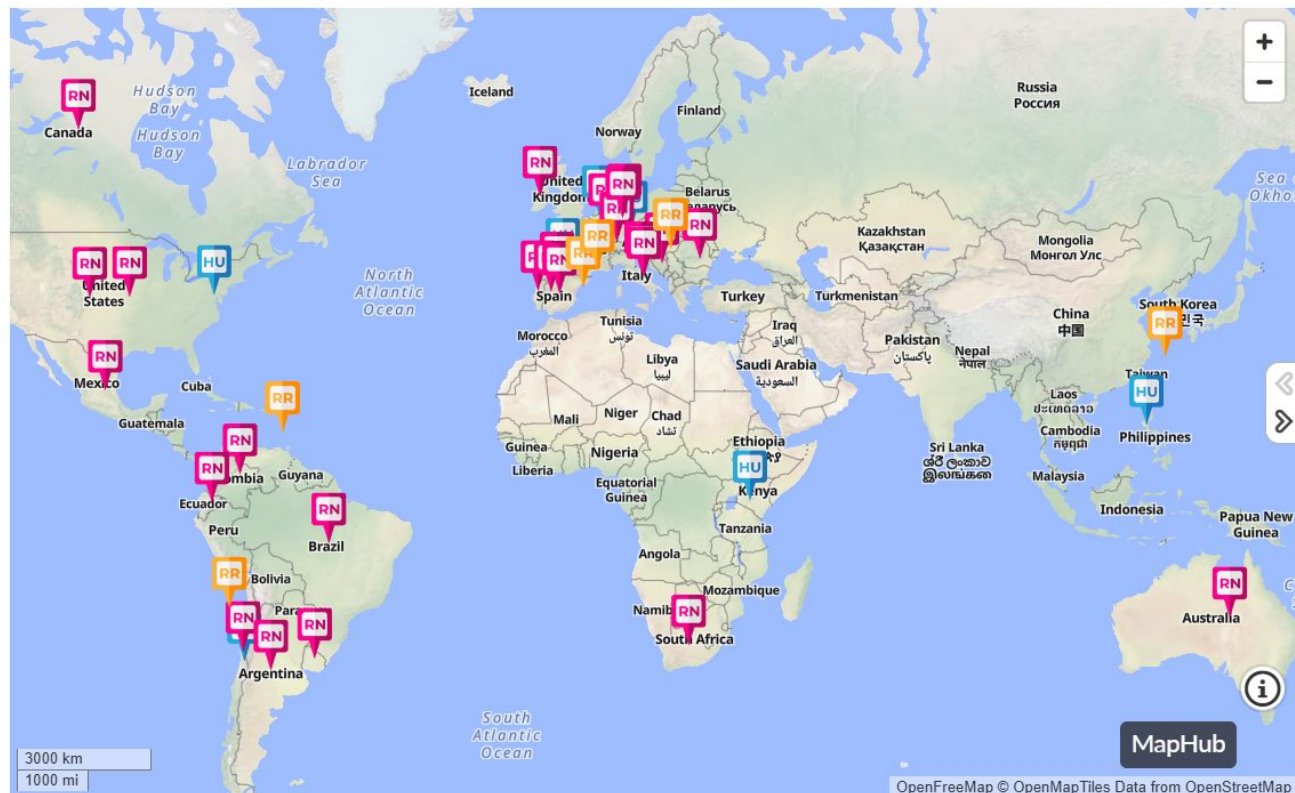
Catholic University of Ghana
Catholic University of Malawi

University of Santo Tomas (Philippines)
Ateneo de Davao (Philippines)
San Carlos University (Philippines)
University of San Agustin (Philippines)
De La Salle-College of St. Benilde (Philippines)
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Universitas Katolik De La Salle Manado (Indonesia)

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MapHub

OpenFreeMap © OpenMapTiles Data from OpenStreetMap



Students Global Symposium 2025

Service-Learning in a Fragile World:
Students nourishing Peace and Hope

October 23rd

How We Changed?

The impact of Service-Learning on Students' Lives

What did we struggle with?

The Main Challenges, Obstacles and Difficulties in Service-Learning Project

What can we improve?

Students' Suggestions for the Service-Learning Implementation Improvement



UNISERVITATE
Solidarity Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education



KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT



UNISERVITATE
Service-learning in Catholic Higher Education



VI Global Symposium **UNISERVITATE**

6th & 7th November 2025

**Service-Learning in a Fragile World:
Universities nourishing Peace and Hope**



**KATHOLISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT**



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Solidarity Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education

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Thank you for your respect for our collective work.
The CLAYSS team



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