European Observatory
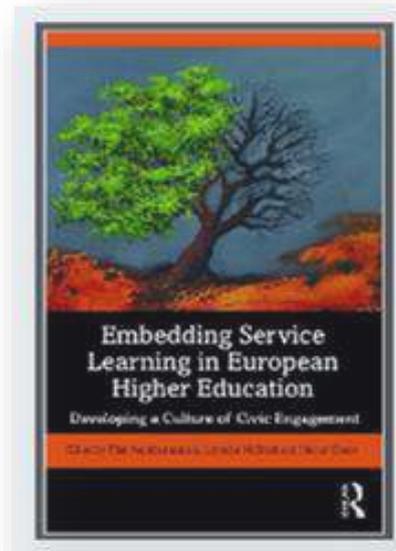of Service-Learning
in Higher Education

Is there a European approach of Service-Learning in Higher Education?

State of the Art of Service-Learning in European Higher Education

Service-Learning is a highly contextualized practice that currently happens in many countries around the world. Cultural, Historical, and political features shape Service-Learning practices, also through terminology. In the year 1990, Jane Kendall found one hundred and forty-seven different terms and descriptions related to Service-Learning. The use of certain terms is influenced by social connotations that some words have. Europe is a diverse continent that includes forty-four countries. The deepest and most updated work that has been done on this topic is the book titled *Embedding Service Learning in European Higher Education. Developing a culture of civic engagement* (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019).

Local languages and cultural burdens have influenced how to name Service-Learning. In the case of Spain is widely used the literal translation to "Aprendizaje-Servicio". In Italy happened the opposite, translation of the term Service-Learning to Italian language is avoided because it can be confused with the "servizio civile nazionale" and other voluntary services, preventing the differentiation of Service-Learning. In the case of Ireland, it is not necessary a translation from English language. In some Post-communist countries, the term Service-Learning is used in English language. In Lithuania, Slovakia, or Croatia, it has been detected a tricky translation to local languages regarding the word 'service', because, like in Italy, the translation of the word 'service' can be confused as a 'social service' issue. Moreover, in Post-communist countries translation also has negative connotations as 'Voluntary activity' turned to perception of Service-Learning as 'a form of unpaid labour to aid the politically powerful'.

In Europe, Service-Learning is a relatively new methodology. In Ireland, first Service-Learning activities appeared in the late 1990s, in a context when Ireland was immersed in the Irish economic boom, and Service-Learning was born as a methodology to promote civic engagement across the university. On the other hand, the first steps of Service-Learning in Spain were in the year two thousand and it appeared in a context of a new educational model & strategies. In Italy, around two thousand and fifteen appeared Service-Learning from a series of isolated experiences that later became a national network. In some post-communist countries, Service-Learning started around two thousand and it appeared in two main ways:

1) in the context of activities and reforms of higher education system and alignment with the Bologna Declaration, and

2) Service-Learning also was Introduced through projects funded by the US government.

It is important to note that the birth of this methodology in higher education of these countries was more or less simultaneously. It concurred with their entry as a full member of the European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process. At that moment, these European countries had two features in common:

1) the implementation of new educational strategies, and 2) a longstanding historical and cultural influence of the Catholic Church, even though it is no official state religion. Currently, in many European countries, more than sixty percent of the population self-identify as catholic (84.7% in Ireland, 71.1% in Spain, 80% in Italy, 86.3% in Croatia, 79% in Lithuania, and 62% in Slovakia). Religion seems not to influence the similarities or differences in the use or translation of the term Service-Learning, even though Catholicism has a long tradition concerning service from a charity perspective. Altogether, it seems to indicate that European countries with a Catholic majority facilitate the implementation of this methodology.
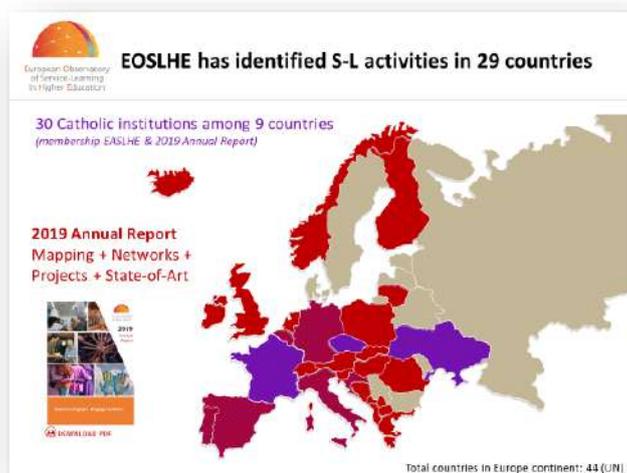
The European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE) has been working during the year 2019 for recording any activity related to, using different collection procedures. The monitoring was performed by mapping experiences, networks, projects, and asking the experts of the state of the art in their countries. Results of its work has been published in the 2019 Annual Report of EOSLHE. In total, it has been identified that at least in twenty-nine European countries has been activity related with Service-Learning in higher education. In nine of them, also including catholic institutions advocating Service-Learning.

The European Union provides funding for a broad range of initiatives and programmes. The ERASMUS+ funds have made a significant contribution to the development and promotion of Service-Learning methodology. EOSLHE has been collecting information of several projects related to Service-Learning that have been funded by the European Union. From 2010 at present, every year there have been at least one project active or in process.

Networks strengths to any activism and movement. There are international and national networks around the globe committed with Service-Learning methodology. In the case of Europe, EOSLHE has found that national networks are mainly consolidated in Western European countries. It is known that there is a Central and Eastern European network that include all educational levels. EOSLHE detected the need of a European coalition. It has been one reason why advocated the formalization and launch of the European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE) in September two thousand nineteen. EASLHE was born in a natural way as their members have come supporting and working together for years.

1st Experts' seminar on European approach of Service-Learning in Higher Education
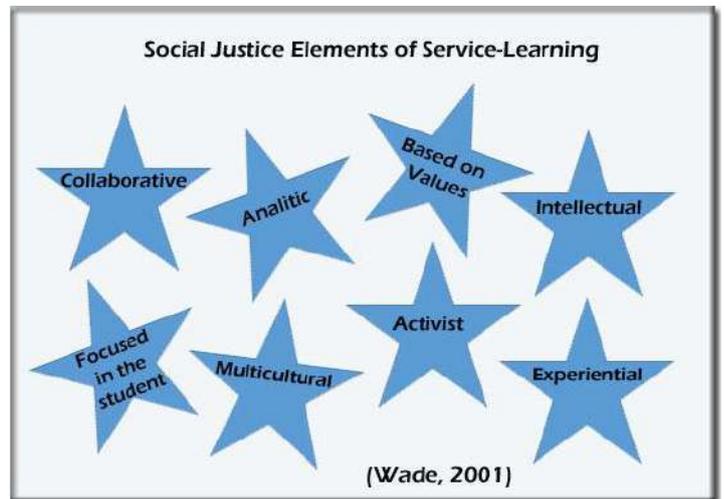
With the aim to clarify if there is a *European approach of Service-Learning in Higher Education*, the Observatory organized the first Experts' Seminar in Madrid, 26TH February 2020. This Newsletter is based on the information thrown by twenty-six experts on Service-Learning from twelve European countries that contributed to this event. Participants were:

- Aitziber Mugarra Elorriaga, University of Deusto (SPAIN)
- Alina Simona Rusu, Babes-Bolyai University (ROMANIA)
- Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, Matej Bel University (SLOVAKIA)
- Ana Cayuela Mateo, EOSLHE (SPAIN)
- Anđela Jakšić-Stojanović, University Donja Gorica (MONTENEGRO)
- Andrea Lyons-Lewis, Nottingham Trent University (UNITED KINGDOM)
- Ángeles Manjarrés Riesco, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (SPAIN)
- Beatriz Delfa Rodríguez, Univerisdad Pontificia de Comillas (SPAIN)
- Carlos Ballesteros García, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas (SPAIN)
- Cinzia Albanesi, University of Bologna (ITALY)
- Clara Guilló Girard, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (SPAIN)
- Elena Lopez de Arana Prado, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (SPAIN)
- Guillermo Mañanes Jiménez, Council hall Madrid (SPAIN)
- Henrietta Gronlund, University of Helsinki (FINLAND)
- Janine Bittner, Geographisches Institut, Ruhr-Universität Bochum (GERMANY)
- Leonor Seguer Prado, Council hall Madrid (SPAIN)
- Lucas Meijs, Erasmus University (NETHERLANDS)
- Lucia Vadillo Graziatti, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas (SPAIN)
- Maria João Vargas-Moniz, ISPA – University Institute (PORTUGAL)
- Marta Alonso Trascasa, EOSLHE (SPAIN)
- Marta María Albert Márquez, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (SPAIN)
- Montserrat Alom, Directrice du Centre International de Recherche et d'Aide à la Décision (CIRAD), Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques (FIUC) (FRANCE)
- Nicolas Standaert, University of Leuven (BELGIUM)
- Pilar Aramburuzabala, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (SPAIN)
- Pilar Pino, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (SPAIN)
- Ruth Gil Prieto, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos (SPAIN)

Previous the debate, participants wrote their opinion regarding how government are related to higher education, the educational traditions, and the role of civil society in their countries. Opinions were commonly shared some weeks before to debate if there is a European education approach, if there is a kind of specific European service tradition, or if Europe is so diverse that there is not that kind of European approach.

The debate was preceded by two presentations on different approaches of Service-Learning. First was a presentation of the cases of United States of America and South America, and the second one was a presentation based on the *2019 Annual Report of the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education* and other activities carried out with the support of EOSLHE.

Bearing in mind that social justice is an inherent concern in Service-Learning, in the American continent, it has been identified two main Service-Learning approaches mainly differentiated in reflection and service elements: the Traditional Service-Learning and the Critical Service-Learning. Traditional Service-Learning aims to meet needs, but with no intended structural inequality transformations. It is centred on the learning of the students through participation in community service projects. Critical Service-Learning draws attention to the root causes of social problems. Its goal is to deconstruct systems of power. Traditional Service-Learning consists of service to the individuals, and Critical Service-Learning means service to an ideal.

Social Justice Elements of Service-Learning

Collaborative · Analitic · Based on Values · Intellectual · Focused in the student · Multicultural · Activist · Experiential

(Wade, 2001)

Service-Learning methodology started eighty years ago in the United States of America (USA). The USA approach evolved from a Traditional Service-Learning to a Critical Service-Learning. It is characterized by a vertical approach: where the students are not part of the community, but they reflect on the community. In the USA, Service-Learning students are considered the beneficiaries of the learning, but they are outsiders to the problem, probably boosted in several causes as a high cost of higher education, a private philanthropic social conception of solidarity, and a high prevalence of dislocated and isolated students. In Latin-American framework, similar to Europe, Service-Learning started four decades ago in a cultural framework where Christianity has an important role. In the case of Latin-America, the definition of Service-Learning includes a feeling of solidarity. Its approach is horizontal: the students reflect on the system as part of the whole system too. In Latin-America, students are part of the entire Service-Learning experience. They are immersed in the problem or need identified.

During the debate, it was stated how in Europe the factors as solidarity, cost of education, isolation of the students, and academic autonomy may have contributed to a unique development of European Service-Learning. There is a European concept of solidarity that implies a well-developed welfare state, universalistic. At the same time, it means an obligation of the state to meet the needs of the community, which can release academic institutions from their responsibility of addressing the community needs, beyond what directly concern the students. Nevertheless, thanks to taxes paid by the community, in the European public universities is intended to achieve equal access to higher education by low tuitions, fees, and scholarships or grants for European citizens. This contribute to the idea of a debt that the academic institutions and the students have with the community, and spread the conception of public solidarity. In combination of a majority of located students, specially undergrads, that usually ask for a direct and immerse interaction of the service practice, supports the idea of a European Service-Learning with horizontal approach, where the students reflect on the system as part of the whole system too. They are realizing that Service-Learning meets the needs where the welfare state has not yet been able to reach, and they try to achieve the gaps in the welfare state, reflecting on root causes of social problems, using the critical perspective, and reinventing democracy. European Service-Learning comes from and is a tool for positive feedback for this conception of public solidarity. One European exception is the case of United Kingdom, where high prices in higher education turn students into costumers, putting a special focus on how the student can pay the debt obtained to be able to study, influence the decision of the student to participate and valuate Service-Learning, and can hind the importance of critical or democratic competencies in its tertiary institutions.

In the course of the debate, it was taking into consideration the accessibility to tertiary education in Europe. It slightly varies from one country to other but the discrepancies were not considered determinants when it comes to the identify the inequality in access for students or related to possible differences in Service-Learning.

Accessibility to higher education usually fits in one of the next three options: through accessibility-exam, just obtaining a higher school diploma, or assessing the previous academic expedient.

Although the Experts on this seminar recognized some academic autonomy, it was stated a similar governmental control by national agencies of accreditation and other informal ways. But certain agreement was stated around the assessment of competencies. It was commonly highly valued the implementation of the Bologna process, where Europe includes in its key competencies of lifelong learning the same principles that also are seeking by Service-Learning, e.g., to develop citizenship based on engagement, Human Rights, equality, and democratic decisions. But the experts are aware of that is not possible to ensure an exclusiveness of Service-Learning methodology to achieve these kind of competences.

The debate finished in the following ideas that could be shaping a European Service-Learning perspective.

- In Europe, we are reinventing the European social welfare system. This issue differs for the USA and Latin America contexts, but it is the background for a European Service-Learning perspective.

- There is a combination of located and dislocated students across Europe. Bachelors usually are more located. Master students are more dislocated as they are traveling much more. Classification of the students by its location can lead us to a very interesting European perspective.

- Bologna process is contributing dislocated students also with the common ETCS equivalence system.

- We cannot say that there is a European perspective regarding the conception volunteerism, and each country has its own way. However, this is something that we will have to discuss if we have dislocated students around Europe.

- There is a European agreement with the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, Europe is attending to a change of the way it embraces solidarity. There is a European trend to privatize and localize citizen's participation. We are moving from indirect solidarity (form the government) to direct solidarity (private) where pro-bono actions are taking relevance in most of the nations in Europe, which is a very private kind of solidarity.

- Except for the UK, education is still cheap apart from non-European students.

- There is a common trust in the government and institutions, even though this can be different for East European countries.

- Democracy and diversity are very different in Europe. In the USA, diversity was about not hurting other people's feelings, meeting, and talking to each other, which also seems very European, but in Europe the perception of democracy includes a consensus-building instead of voting.

- It is commonly sharing that Service-Learning should achieve the development of learning skills, not only as a way of developing skills.

There may not be a European approach of Service-Learning as such. Each European country has a specific framework and its own Service-Learning experiences. Nevertheless, this continent sometimes called the "Old World" or "Old continent" is characterized by its intellectual traditions, pedagogies, and policies that differ from other parts of the world.


TIMELINE OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Img source: (Edwards et al., 2009)
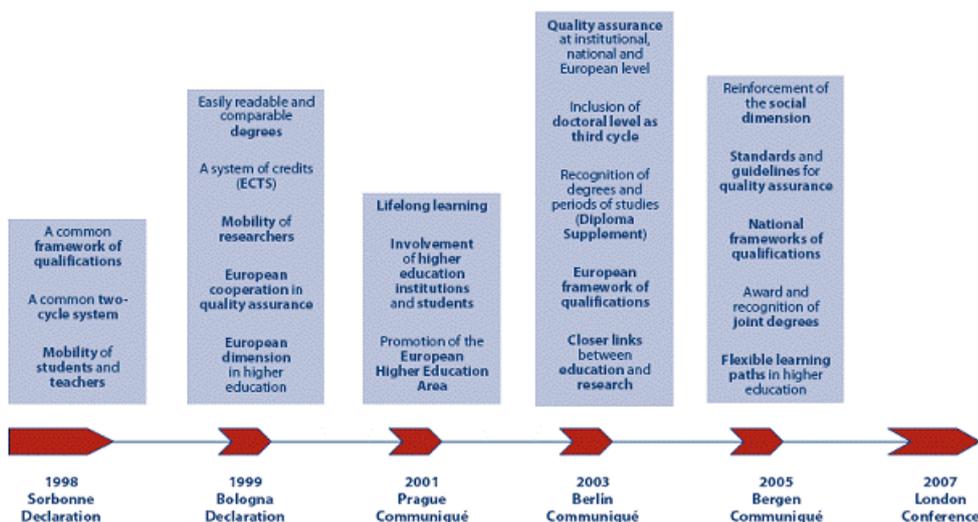
Higher education framework by countries

Higher education framework in each country of the participants in the first Experts' Seminar of the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education. The following words are the contribution shared among the experts previous to the debate, and regarding the relationship between government and higher education, the educational tradition, and the role of civil society, factors that could be shaping a European approach of Service-Learning in Higher Education.

Higher Education Framework in Belgium

Government relation to higher education in Belgium is very similar to the case of the Netherlands. The regional government pays for education. The annual inscription fee is c. 900 euro/ year; students can get a scholarship according to the tax revenue of their parents. The government is not allowed to intervene in the curricula, except for teacher training programs; but the government organizes (together with a Dutch institution) the accreditation of the programs. All universities are submitted to the same higher education law, salaries of professors, annual inscription fees, etc. From this point of view, there are no major differences between the universities.
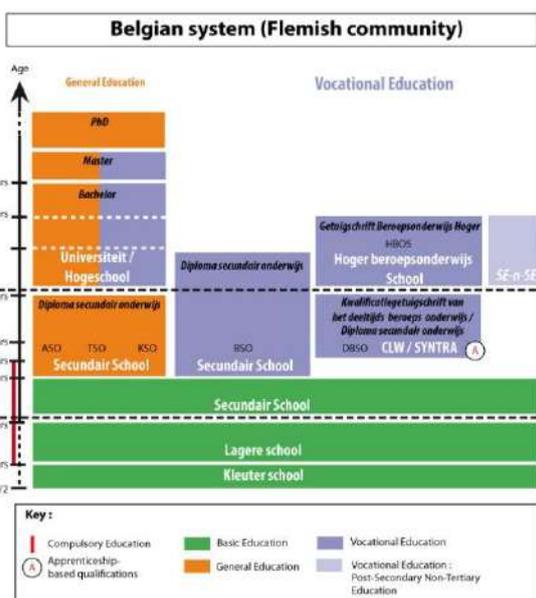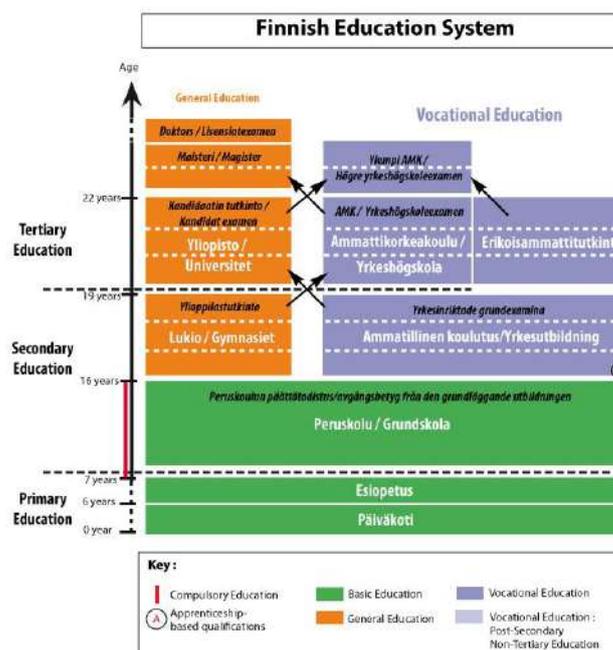
Educational tradition in Belgium is special. There is no selection; students with a High school degree is sufficient. It is changing the way of teaching, from a textbook learning Belgium is moving towards a more practice learning.

Relations of Belgium higher education institutions with civil society are being affected by a less and less rooted in civil society. Diversity is still a problem in higher education, less so in larger cities with a diverse cultural, social, and religious environment than in smaller cities such as Leuven.

Nicolas Standaert [Head of Sinology Department. Academic responsible for service-learning at the University of Leuven Flanders]

Higher Education framework in Finland

The Finland government is related to higher education in two ways. Universities are independent legal entities, and universities of applied sciences (=polytechnics) are public limited companies. Both are funded by the government but have different funding models. The funding models do not directly influence the curriculum, but it is related to the education focus and issues such as the amounts of degrees and the pace of the students' studies (for details: https://minedu.fi/en/steering-financing-and-agreements)

Tables source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

In Finnish higher educational tradition, the selection of students is based either on an entrance examination or the grades of a matriculation examination (or equivalent). Universities of applied sciences emphasize a practical orientation (e. g. integrating volunteering in the curriculum) and social interaction more than universities, but there is an increasing number of courses and initiatives that use problem-based approaches also in universities. Collaboration in university courses more often takes place with private and public sector partners than with civil society partners.

Service-Learning is still in its infancy in Finland, and civil society relations with higher education only rarely manifest as Service-Learning. The values of higher education institutions comprise values such as diversity and sustainability. For example, the University of Helsinki, the largest and oldest academic institution if Finland states in its strategy that it aims to solve global problems and partners with civic organizations among other stakeholders (for details: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/university/the-university-of-helsinki-in-brief/three-core-duties).

Henrietta Grönlund (Professor of Urban Theology, Docent of Church and Social Studies, Doctor of Theology)

Higher Education framework in France

The government in France is related to higher education through funding and curriculum. Public universities receive governmental funding, whereas private ones generally don't. State provides an average of 7000-8000 euros per student/per year, plus bursaries, which allows for access to higher education to any student. Students tend to pay 300-400 euros per year for a Bachelor or Master (including well-being schemes) in public universities. However, this remains inadequate to reach high quality higher education. As for private universities or High Schools ("Grandes écoles", which are either Engineering or Trade-oriented), tuition fees vary according to disciplines, ranging from 4.000 to 20.000 euros.

The State decides precisely on the content of certain higher education programmes (like BTS and DUT). As for LMD (Bachelors-Masters-Doctorate) or DU (University diplomas), there is a Law (Loi relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités – called "Loi LRU" ou "Loi Pécresse") that allows public universities to decide upon the specific content and way of programme delivering. Although universities have always benefitted from a substantial level of autonomy, this law strengthens such autonomy. This means that, although government provides general guidelines for Bachelors programmes to make sure that each discipline's basic concepts and notions are tackled, universities can create new programs on any topic and have more options to get funding other than the State to do so. Concerning the private higher education institutions, some are recognized by the State (in terms of program content and professorship), and others aren't (and, thus, need to establish partnerships with those recognized if they wish their programs to be officially recognized in the country). These institutions are free to develop their programs and set their tuition fees. If they wish to be fully recognized, they need, however, to follow the (broad) framework established by the State. Institutions that are not recognized, in the practice, tend to align on programs from recognized and renowned higher education institutions. At last, there are few differences between both public and private as for government influence on the curriculum.
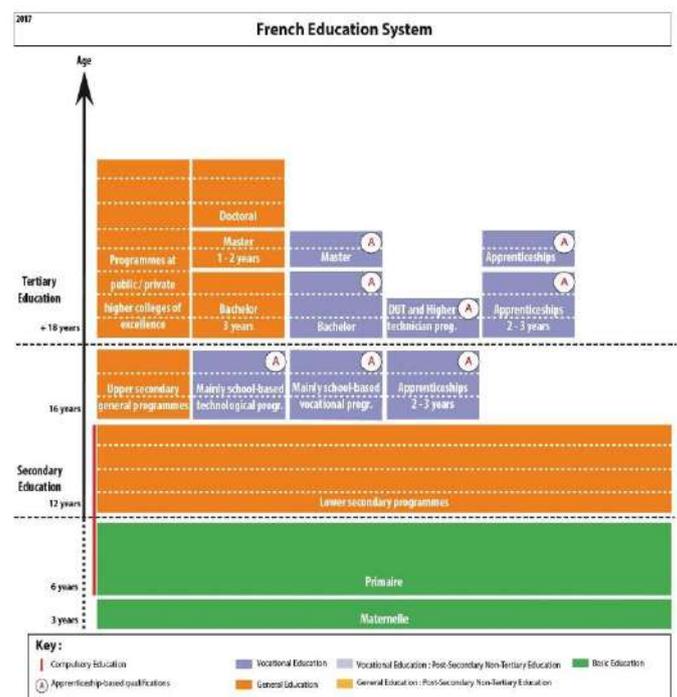

Table source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

More recently, France has established a legal framework so that universities review their teaching policies to integrate the so-called "student engagement" in the undergraduate curriculum. Article 29 of the Law 2017-86 on equality and citizenship, issued on January 27, 2017, made the recognition of student engagement compulsory for French Higher Education Institutions (HEI). As a result, Article L611-9 was included in the country's Code of Education. The law was completed by Decree n°2017-962, issued on May 10, 2017, on the Recognition of students' engagement in associations, civil society organizations, and professional life. According to the Decree, Higher Education Institutions are required to implement measures ensuring that competences, knowledge and know-how acquired by the above-mentioned students are taken into account and qualify for the degree they pursue.

The educational tradition to access French higher education, students must possess the "Bac" (exam taken at the end of high school to enter university), and, for some disciplines, they must have followed some specific disciplinary itineraries when at high school. There are two main modes to access higher education: 1) "Parcoursup" – Once the "Bac" obtained, students choose several degrees they wish to study. Following the number of spots available and depending on type of high school itinerary, an algorithm associates students with one of the degree options chosen. Scores obtained at "Bac" have no influence at all. 2) "Classes préparatoires" – Depending on the score obtained at "Bac", students can opt for a "class prépa", which is a one- or two-year preparation class to access Grandes Ecoles (and sometimes SciencesPo).

Students possessing a Bachelor's can automatically go on for a Masters. As for acceptance, each university has its selection grid, which is applied case by case (sometimes depending on the score, previous studies, and trajectory, future motivations…).

There are great disparities with regard to the third mission of universities: some are extremely committed to being actors in their settings, others quite inward-looking… although, generally speaking, there is a move towards becoming more responsible, more environmentally sustainable, more committed to society, more inclusive…

Regarding French teaching tradition. There is a trend towards a smaller number of textbook-based learning. Pedagogy depends on the number of students in the class and also on each professor's preferences (although some HEI authorities try to impose problem-based courses or at least to increase the use of similar pedagogies in their settings). There are also some higher education institutions that offer seminars favouring professors-students interactions on the basis of invited professors and at-class reading of works.

The relationship between civil society and higher education institutions is complex. Some universities have developed longstanding durable relationships, whereas others are not that advanced, but still, there are quite a lot of university-company or university-industry partnerships. Generally speaking, French higher education institutions are extremely well integrated within the socio-economic tissue, there are grants for students to do internships within companies or civil society organizations while continuing to study, and there are even laws allowing for funding taxes that further encourage such interaction and partnerships.

Montserrat Alom (Directrice du Centre International de Recherche et d'Aide à la Décision (CIRAD), Fédération Internationale des Universités Catholiques (FIUC))

Higher Education framework in Germany

The German higher education system is a varied one and consists of public and private universities, public and private universities of applied sciences, technical and teacher training colleges, and specialized colleges of art and music. Government is related to the funds of the public universities, and the other public Higher Education Institutions, that lies within the responsibility of the federal states (federal budget system). They receive financial resources from the regional budget, external funding, and other revenues (equity financing). The state financing is governed by higher education contracts between the state and the universities or colleges (solidarity pact) and target

agreements. (Tuitions) fees at public universities and colleges have been abolished in all federal states (first bachelor and master's degree), but fees are usually charged for long-term or second-degree students. Target agreements are powerful instruments of accomplishing policy objectives in higher education, and target agreements are linked to financial commitments (e.g., creation of additional student places).

The sector of private universities and colleges is growing and is focusing on potential students, that are not addressed by the academic programs at the public universities. They offer career-oriented degree programs, an efficient and good organized study structure as well as good conditions of studying. The market is strongly competitive and profit-oriented (dependence on study fees, external funding, and other benefits). Private higher education institutions also try to satisfy the demand for further training activities (lifelong learning).

In comparison to the rest of Europe, the national higher education system in Germany has been very selective for a long time. In the meanwhile, efforts have been made to facilitate the access of students with a non-academic or/and migrant background, taking into account occupational experiences in access to higher education institutions.

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

Internal performance-related financial distribution is linked to the achievement of goals and case numbers concerning, for example, achieving

optimum capacity utilization, graduation rate, the proportion of foreign graduates, graduates that completed their studies within the standard period.

The composition of the student population varies strongly. There are differences between the federal states, the different study programs (entry barriers), public and private universities and colleges, as well as the proportion of high school-leavers who get access and go on to university. That also leads to special demands on lecturers, instructors, and training staff of Service -Learning courses.

The development of study programs for different target groups is the responsibility of the different universities, universities of applied sciences, and colleges (framework specifications of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs KMK and accreditation rules apply to all higher education institutions). The bachelor study programs are usually full-time programs: The development of study and examination regulations that could also include new innovative forms of teaching and learning is carried out by the faculties in consultation with the central administration units of the universities and other higher education institutions.

Concerning the development of study programs, private universities and private universities of applied sciences are more focusing on students as paying customers through precise analysis of target groups and their special needs (e.g., student support infrastructure, advisory services).

German educational tradition concerns the enrolment restrictions in the bachelor and master study programs that exist nationwide and locally. Nationwide admission-limited is the study programs medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy. The Foundation for University Admissions manages the procedure of the selection of applicants. Other study programs are currently admission-limited locally (local NC numerus clausus, selection criterion high school graduation grade, waiting time, sometimes also selection interviews, entrance tests).

The government is making a lot of efforts to increase the percentage of academics among the working population and to motivate more high school-leavers to get enrolled in tertiary education
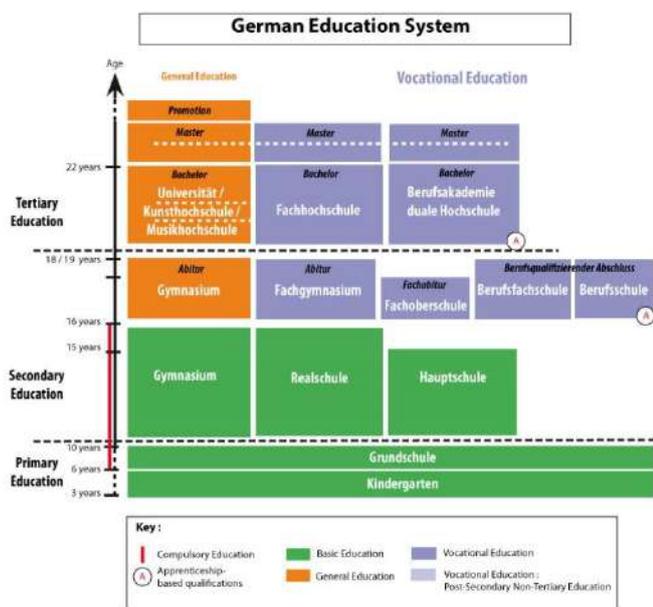
programs to reach a positive development in the sense of increasing educational participation.

The Higher Education Pact (2007-2020, out-financing until 2023) is one instrument of the Federal Government and the Federal States to ensure a high quality of tertiary education in Germany and to provide additional enrolment capacities. The Higher Education Pact will be followed by the agreement between the Federal Government and the Federal States "future agreement to strengthen teaching and learning" (as of 2021).

The first pillar of the Higher Education Pact was intended to increase the student capacities (ensuring high teaching quality). The third pillar, the Teaching Quality Pact, aimed to encourage and support higher education institutions in Germany to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as to extend the support and supervision of students. In this context, efforts have been undertaken to establish innovative and student-oriented forms of teaching and learning.

With the "Shift from teaching to learning" in German academic teaching, a constructivist approach and collaborative forms of teaching and learning have increased considerably in importance, including "experience" and "problem-based learning".

In the German Higher Education research and teaching are traditionally the main pillars. But the discussions and considerations about the "third mission" of the universities have rapidly evolved in recent years. The Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft) provided financial support to universities that had undertaken a structural adaptation to develop the third pillar, to engage in local society and to address its needs. Knowledge transfer, the involvement in regional (innovation) networks, and the implementation and further development of relationships between the universities and the various civil society players are of great importance. At an increasing number of universities, coordination offices have been established to develop and design the relationship between the university and civil society. This, in particular, enables the growing number of teaching staff that offers Service-Learning courses in several disciplines to draw on existing networks.

Nationwide funding programs promote the development of "third mission" activities at the universities of applied sciences.

Many universities and universities of applied sciences intensify their efforts to adapt to the increasing diversity of students. The requirements differ from region to region. Special support measures and activities are offered, for example, for students (and academics) with a non-academic or migration background, with disabilities, with children, etc. (language courses, counselling services, scholarship programs, or disadvantage compensation).

Janine Bittner (Lecturer with Special Responsibilities, Ruhr-University Bochum, Institute of Geography)

Higher Education framework in Italy

The Italian government is related to higher education. The Ministry annually allocates annually ordinary funding to state universities and legally recognized non-state universities. Resources are attributed based on different parameters: one is the number of students (the university calculate a standard cost per student); other important parameters are the results of teaching and research (and in the near future of third mission activities); resources are also attributed if there is the need to safeguard particularly critical situations. Students pay tuition fees in public and private universities (in the latter fees are usually higher), but students can be offered scholarships that cover totally or partially the costs of university fees, based both on merit, or on income. Regional governments can offer additional resources to support students.
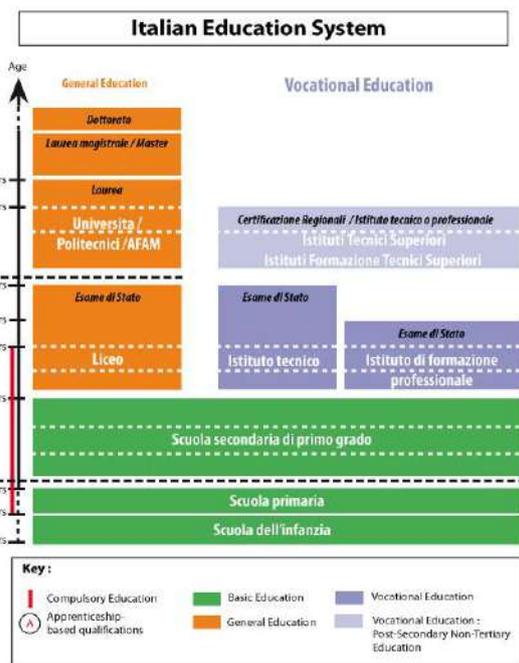
The Italian government does not influence the curriculum. Law n. 240/2010 has introduced the Higher Education Quality Assurance system (AVA) to adhere to Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). ANVUR (Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes) besides checking the quality of the Service offered

by the Italian University and the use of public resources, is in charge of accreditation of new Universities and programs Periodic accreditation of Universities and their programs.

Italian Education System

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

There is not much difference between public and private universities. Like in many other countries, universities are submitted to the same higher education law concerning funding, recruitment accreditation procedures. There are small variations concerning salaries and fees.

Italian educational tradition concerns the selection of students that depends on Faculties/ Departments that may establish specific entrance and establish a maximum number of students per year also to facilitate access to the job market in accordance with specific stakeholders. There are many differences, also based on profession/disciplines. Number of students per year is fixed at the national level for medical doctors, while for other professions each university decide on its own, how and how many students to admit (baseline, however, is having obtained a high school degree, so-called diploma, that has the same legal value irrespectively of the specific educational track. Also, students in vocational tracks can get a diploma that grants access to the university). Italian educational tradition has internships as "always" mandatory in Medicine, Psychology, and Education.

Many courses introduced Laboratories to offer more "practical" or group-based learning". However, it would be difficult to say that in the Italian University there is a tradition of problem-based learning. And the Italian university still faces the challenge of improving the quality and relevance of skills acquired in tertiary education.

Italian education is rooted in civil society in some way. During the accreditation process, and when proposing new degrees (both at the Master and Bachelor level), University must consult relevant stakeholders to make sure that the professional profile that they are preparing fits the labour market or community needs. Recently with the emphasis on the third mission, many universities are trying to establish/reinforce their relationships with civil society. Moreover, in principle, the University is open and inclusive. Support is offered to students with special needs, and there is an effort to offer equal opportunities to any students (i.e., transgender students who have not gone through surgery can ask the University to recognize their "alias" identity which is valid within the University and in all procedures concerning the student). But for students from a very disadvantaged background, including those with a migrant background, attending university is still a challenge.

Cinzia Albanesi (Associate professor, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna)

Higher Education framework in Montenegro

The government in Montenegro just influences the public higher education institutions through the budgets for the fees. Undergraduate and master studies are free of charge for all students of state University. It was introduced by the amendment of the Law of Higher education in Montenegro. The students of undergraduate studies on state universities do not have to pay fees since 2017/2018, while master studies are supposed to be free of charge since 2020/2021. Students of Ph.D. studies pay tuition fees at state universities.
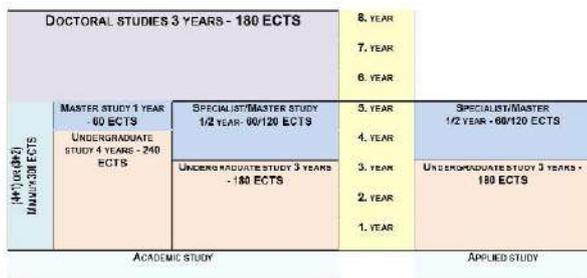
There are also three private universities, and students have to pay an annual fee for their studies. Certain universities such as University Donja Gorica provide scholarships for students who finished secondary school as winners of diploma "Luča", which are students with extraordinary results, students with disabilities, etc. In Montenegro, the Government generally does not influence the curriculum. Law of Higher Education defines some basic rules; some recommendations are provided in the Strategy of Higher Education. The responsible institution for the accreditation process is the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education. There is no difference between private and state universities in Montenegro in terms of accreditation. There is also no difference regarding procedures, rules, etc. Generally, the main difference refers to flexibility. Private universities are generally more flexible, and curricula are more market-oriented.

Educational tradition in Montenegro includes enrolment on the bachelor level. The main criteria are results achieved in secondary school- the marks from secondary school, the mark on matura exam, awards on competitions, etc. After summarizing point, the rank list is created, and the best-ranked students have the right to enroll certain faculty. The number of students for each faculty, no matter state or private, is defined by license provided by the Ministry of Education according to human resources of the institution, infrastructure, etc. The procedure is completely the same for state and private universities. When talking about master courses, except marks from undergraduate studies, important criteria are knowledge of the foreign language as well as the results of the interview.

The relationship between civil society and higher education institutions in Montenegro is strong. The third mission of the universities is recognized as one of the main pillars of higher education in all strategic and institutional documents. Also, one of the accreditation criteria for the Montenegrin higher education institutions is the number of functional collaborative contracts with NGOs, companies, institutions, and other stakeholders, which can offer possibilities for internships, professional practice, etc. But, although there is a significant improvement in the last years regarding the social dimension of the higher education process, the examples of good practices are still more individual cases, and a lot of efforts should be put in the future to improve this segment.

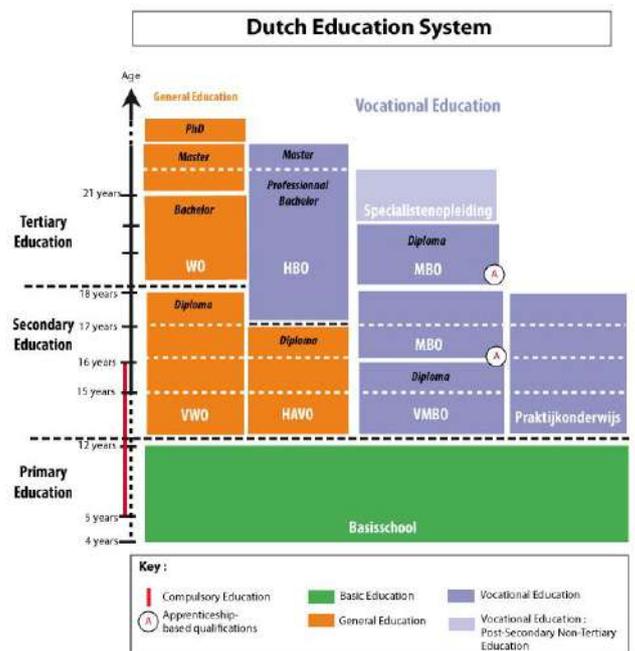*Anđela Jakšić-Stojanović (Assistant Professor, PhD, University Donja Gorica)*

Higher Education framework in Netherlands

Service-Learning has much to do with government-higher education regulations, pedagogy traditions, relations between civil society - higher education institutions, and volunteerism traditions. Answers to these questions could be national or European.

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

In the Netherlands, in general, the government sets higher education in two ways. It pays an amount (flat rate) per student that differs between studies. The fee covers more or less the time needed to lecture, which means that additional money for research needs to be found or teaching needs to be made efficient. But the government does not influence the curriculum directly. It uses accreditation bodies to check for consistency between curriculum and learning objectives. Learning objectives are negotiated with the government to get financial support. Also, the government can try to force schools to merge. In the Netherlands, there are no real private for-profit universities. The majority of universities in the Netherlands are public and supported by the government.

Educational tradition in the Netherlands, generally spoken, has to do with equity. There is no selection allowed for bachelors. Having a high school degree is sufficient. For the Masters, the selection is allowed but is almost totally based upon grades and curriculum. Pedagogy in schools that have a clear connection to professions usually have internships, but except for the University of Maastricht, there is no much attention for problem-based teaching.

The relationships between civil society, as the "third sector" of the society, could influence Service-Learning. Dutch education, also at the university level, is rooted in civil society, due to the corporatist pillar structure. But these roots, except for two universities, really have lost their meanings. Universities try to be as inclusive as possible, but in reality, they are very local leading, on a bachelor level. Only a few are truly diverse.

Lucas Meijs (Professor of Volunteering, Civil Society and Businesses and Professor of Strategic Philanthropy, Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Higher Education framework in Romania

In Romania, public higher education institutions are regulated by the government in two ways.

One way is that they receive subventions. For the students, there are possibilities for types of scholarships depending on the level of studies (undergraduate level, Master level, and Ph.D. level). The state permits that higher education institutions enrol students for a specific fee. The requirement for admission is to pass an exam. It is mandatory for every student and does not distinguish by category (those students financed by the state and fee-based). Depending on the admission performance, students are distributed in a first or second category. Based on their academic performance in the first semester, after the admission, students can switch from fee-based status to being financed by the state. The second way concerns the curricula. For specializations, it tends to be unitary, and Government influences them. I.e., the content and the structure of the mandatory subjects should be based on specific competencies, and they are checked periodically by the national accreditation body. Autonomy is offered to higher education institutions in terms of the content of the elective subjects, but they should be also connected with the specialization. In Romania, there is no difference between private and state universities in terms of accreditation. The accreditation criteria for functioning are identical. The national accreditation body is the same for both categories of universities.

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr
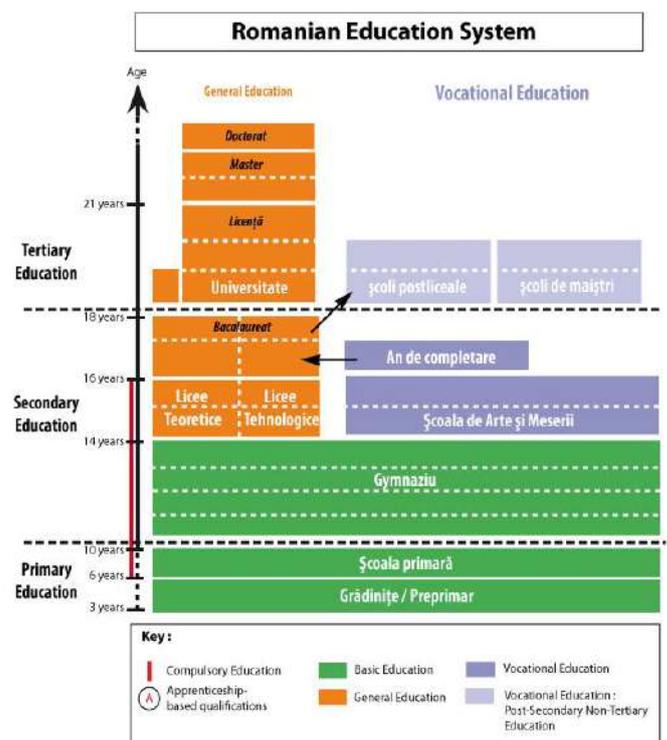
Educational traditions in Romania concern that the high school degree is a mandatory criterion to access to Higher Education. In choosing their master's program, based on several surveys at the institutional level (questionnaires handed to Alumni at the moment of collecting their graduation certificates/ diplomas), students usually decide for a Master's program in continuation of their Bachelor's degree. Universities in Romania tend to be perceived as providers of civic values and of possibilities for students to apply in practice and real-life situations theoretical knowledge offered by higher education institutions.

The relationship between civil society and Romanian higher education is strong. One of the accreditation criteria is the number of functional collaborative contracts with NGOs, companies, and other types of community agents, which can offer possibilities for internships, field education, and community-oriented volunteering programs. A qualitative analysis of the official statements of the five top Universities in Romania indicates that, even though the concept of Service-Learning is not specifically addressed in the documents, all these higher education institutions are presenting their missions and values in three main categories: education, research and civic participation (the "third mission").

Alina S. Rusu (Associate Professor, Ph.D., School of Psychology and Sciences of Education, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca)

Higher Education framework in Slovakia

Slovakian government pays for education to higher education institutions. The amount of payment depends on several factors, for example, the number of students, results in science and publication activities, results in the last process of accreditation. There is a different amount of money for bachelor, master, and Ph.D. students. The model of financing is based on the model of natural sciences, so it is less convenient for universities focused on humanities and social science. The finances from the government cover most of the expenses for the salaries of professors.
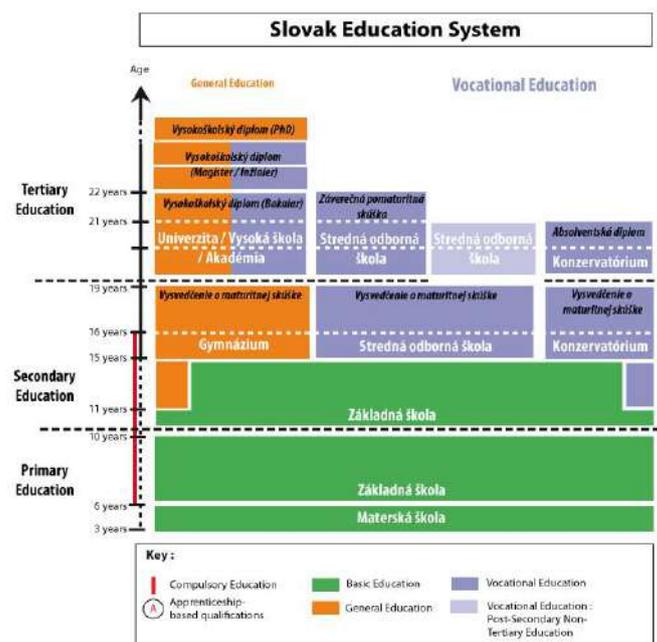
Government influences the curriculum, but currently, there are many changes in Slovakia in the system of accreditation of higher education institutions. There is a law in Slovakia, which defines the list of study fields, and each study field has the profile of graduates and also a basic curriculum for different levels of education. This "descriptions" of study fields were prepared by representatives of higher education institutions nominated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. Each university should respect this description when preparing the study program in the specific study field.

Educational traditions in Slovakia concerns the selection process that only happens at some study programs, but for most universities, high school degree is sufficient. For the master students, it is the same; the results from bachelor study are important. Some study programs (for example, social work, preschools, and primary teaching) give extra points to the students who were involved in volunteering activities.

The education in most of the study programs is based on textbook lecturing, but last years there were many changes in the system of education, especially in the study programs preparing for the teaching and helping professions. They are moving to experience and problem-based learning. In this study programs, there is also linking to the community and community partners. Generally, in Slovakia, there is only a little attention paid to the university as a part of the community.

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

The tradition of volunteer work and civic activism was forcibly interrupted in totalitarian regimes (before 1989), and the operation of all forms of independent organizations was deliberately and systematically reduced or subjected to strict control. Civil society itself and the voluntary engagement of citizens in resolving local problems were not supported. Any civic engagement was state-controlled, more compulsory than voluntary. The level of civic engagement in Slovakia still cannot compare to that reached in countries with a developed culture of engagement in resolving local problems. The latest research, from 2011, shows that only 27% of adults had participated in formal volunteering in the previous 12 months (Brozmanová Gregorová et al., 2012). This low rate of participation is due to the above-mentioned historical experience, as well as to other problems and needs identified in the analysis presented by European Volunteering Centre (2011), such as the need to actively motivate people to get involved in civic and voluntary activities; the need to educate about volunteering; and the need for education, training, and capacity building in the field of volunteering and civic engagement. Solidarity in the context of practical community service carries a voluntary attribute, not only to indicate that a person participates in it of his or her own will but also to express a certain contradiction to compulsory solidarity. Historically, voluntary solidarity was the precursor to that of a compulsory nature, but the powerful social state during the period of communism and consequently to the social-democratic direction of governments after 1989 led to its weakening. Compulsory or forced solidarity and contributions to the social system began to be seen by people as fulfilling their obligations toward others to fulfil reciprocity and comradeship. This is evidenced by research findings on the perception of volunteering among people in Slovakia. For example, there is a strong belief in Slovakia that volunteers would not be needed if the state fulfilled its obligations. In 1998, this view was held by 55% of respondents (Woleková, 2002) and by 74% in 2003 (Bútorová, 2004). This view is upheld even in the young generation. In research conducted in 2017 (Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová, & Siekelová, 2018) among young people aged 15 to 30, up to 54% of respondents agreed with this view. As Bútorová (2004) states, this way of thinking is based on the idea that, under ideal conditions, the hand of the caregiving state should "reach out" to every situation in the life of the community, whether it is a situation of emergency or development opportunities.

The specificity of Service-Learning development in Slovak conditions is its connection with education for volunteering and civic engagement. In April 2018, the Strategy for Education of Children and Youth for Volunteering in Slovakia (Koncepcia výchovy a vzdelávania detí a mládeže k dobrovoľníctvu; 2018) was adopted by the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport. This Strategy views volunteering as a cross-sectional theme and a space for experiential learning based on the reflection of experience, and thus promulgate the view that children and young people should be led by pedagogues toward active participation, a proactive approach in solving societal problems, helping others through volunteer activities, but also toward inclusive behavior's and prosocial attitudes and values.

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová (Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, vice-dean for international cooperation, public relation and third mission at Faculty of Education, unofficial Service-Learning coordinator)

Higher Education framework in Spain

The Spanish government influences universities. In Spain, higher education has two different models. State (public), which is somehow free, although students have to pay a registration fee every year (not tuition), and Private, which again have two different approaches: purely private, the ones for profit-making managed by civic society, and a not-for-profit, mainly Catholic Universities. In Spain (Public High Education), the State pays around 6000€/year for each university student. The students pay approx. 1.100€ /year. There are also university scholarships for students with low-income families. The government had established an official National Agency (ANECA), which accredits the different degrees and postgraduate titles sent by Universities.

There are some minimum common guidelines (60 ECTS per year, four years per Degree; 60 for a Master) and about some common ground courses. There are expert committees (formed by Professors and a member of the Agency) that evaluate and approve the degrees/postgrads. They can make suggestions about content. Once approved, there is a revision every 5-10 years. The review is mainly if the declared issues match with reality. Public universities tend to have a longer history of research, have higher percentages of PhDs among their academic staff, and a higher level of publications. They also have access to public aid that is not accessible to private universities, as is the case of Madrid City Council's university Service-Learning program.

On the other hand, private universities tend to have good connections with the professional sector (e.g., good internship agreements) and offer more personalized training (a closer link between professor and student is assumed). As for Catholic universities, they usually have identity-based subjects in their academic programs. Apart from that, Universities can choose teaching methods and additional courses and complementary diplomas. Regional Authorities can also influence to some extent. Civil society universities are very few in Spain, mainly catholic oriented and elitist. Very good in teaching, but with a lack of research (improving). They are mission-driven, and some are proselytizing.


Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

Regarding Service-Learning, it seems more implication or interest for service learning issues on private Universities, but a relevant impulse for Service-Learning has been already a leader by Madrid City Hall, by singing a convention or agreement with the eight public Universities of Madrid to foster Service-Learning in this Convention's framework.

University Rectors and Manuela Carmena, Mayor of Madrid. (July, 2017)

Each of these public Universities of Madrid has created its Service-Learning office that will facilitate the formation, the implementation, the relation between the university and different institutions or organizations. The City Hall will finance these activities, including the hiring of an expert to do this work. If Service-Learning would be described in the curriculum as a methodological strategy, it could have more presence at the universities. The value of diversity in the political language, but society tends to simplify and homogenize groups. Despite this, at Universidad Complutense de Madrid we are moving towards Design for All People that implies a change of look and action, proposing beyond the curricular adaptations for groups or groups, personalized education that allows us to adjust to the needs of each person in its development, learning, and participation. The social entities have supported the change of regulations, adapted responses, varied resources.

Educational tradition in Spain concerns that every applicant has to hold a high school degree and pass a national examination. Due to university overcrowding, the grade obtained in this exam allows students to choose the degree among State universities (in a grade-ranked basis). For the rest of the universities (private/civil society), a student must pass the exam but each university has its admission criteria and tests, sometimes tighter, sometimes softer). The educational approach in
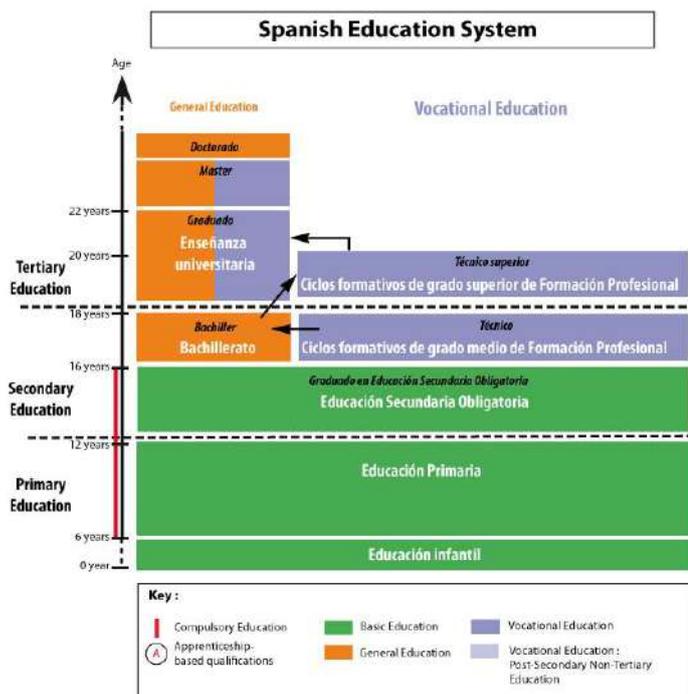
Spain is mainly traditional. The professor (lecturer) teaches in a loud voice, with the base in readings and cases, and students take notes. There is some research in books and papers (flipped classroom) and sometimes some "practices" inside the classroom, which are more likely examples or mini-cases.

Nevertheless, things are changing and depend much more on the discipline taught and, of course, of the University. In Spain, there are more than 80 universities with roughly 1.600.000 students (degree). Postgraduate teaching is more problem solving oriented and or uses case methodology. But also the methodological tradition has been changing when the European Higher Education Framework was established. The new tradition has been based on the problem-solving, case study, cooperative work, debates, tics inclusion in teaching programs, and assessment by portfolios. In relation to Service-Learning, this kind of experience has proliferated, and it has been an increase in the presence of Service-Learning in the training offer for university teachers (Álvarez, Martínez, González, and Buenestado, 2017). It is important to mention the lack of resources in public universities and its influence in this new learning methodologies. It is not easy to improve a problem/experience-based learning when one faculty has three groups of a hundred students (each one).

The relationship between civil society and higher education institutions in Spain is complex. Spanish universities are increasingly aware of their civic mission and their responsibility to respond to the SDGs. Universities are working on social responsibility, SDGs, with society, but there is still a lot of work to do. Educational initiatives that have these objectives are more individual than institutional.

In Spanish society to hold a university degree is very prestigious. Professional training (non-university) is not so valuated, although this is changing since, say, ten years ago, because it is improving in both social consideration and the quality of the training. Holding a university degree is "necessary" to apply for a job, although the job itself does not need this type of qualification. A degree is devalued due to competitiveness accessing the labour market: More and more to hold a degree is insufficient but a Dual degree. A

Ph.D. has value only for an academic career and within Academy, but it has no social consideration. Baby boomers overcrowded University. Therefore, it supposes the democratization of higher education. Millennials are not that much university oriented. Diversity is a value for the Spanish culture, and therefore it is present in degrees and studies. Especially gender issues in the last 5-10 year has acquired enormous importance.

Carlos Ballesteros (Professor at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas); *Elena López-de-Arana* (Professor Autonomous University of Madrid); *Pilar Pino* (Coordinator of the service learning office of Carlos III University of Madrid); *Marta Albert Márquez* (Professor in Universidad Rey Juan Carlos); *Lucía Vallecillo* (SL Coordinator at Universidad Pontificia de Comillas); *Mercedes García*- (Rector's Delegate for Diversity and Inclusion); *Clara Guilló*, (Sociocultural Diversity coordinator. Universidad Complutense de Madrid)

Higher Education framework in the United Kingdom

Government relation with higher education is a complex picture in England & Wales (not the UK as a whole) whereby the government pays for students' education up front and then students repay the government once they have graduated and are earning a certain level of salary. There is a unit cost per student which varies by discipline. Since 2012 universities have charged high tuition fees to students (currently about 14,000 Euros per annum) and the level of fees that can be charged is capped by the government. These are the fees that the government pays upfront to universities and which are repaid later by graduates. Turning students in to 'customers' in this way who are buying a very expensive service, and individualizing their 'student experience' is a challenge to the values that underpin service-learning and can lead to student resistance – 'this isn't what I paid for!'

In England & Wales, in general, the government does not influence the curriculum directly but it uses accreditation bodies and HE quality standards bodies to check for consistency with national quality standards, industry standards, discipline benchmarks, etc. The government sets broad

agendas outside of the academic curricula such as 'employability' and 'success for all', and then institutions must develop plans for implementing these and demonstrating success against nationally set criteria. Institutions that use service-learning usually link it to one of these broader national agendas (as well as own institution's mission).

There are very few private universities (11). Most 'public' universities are quasi-private in that they compete for 'customers' (students) and charge high tuition fees. But many standards and criteria are still set by the national government.

Source: http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr

The educational tradition includes that universities select students based on high school grades (in most cases 'A Levels') in a points based system (e.g. A=120 points). Popular courses and prestigious universities ask for higher points. The university sets this. Many prestigious universities (i.e. Oxford & Cambridge) and some courses also select students via interview. Masters programs select on grades and sometimes interviews. For some universities/courses, the grade points required are quite low. We have about 50% participation rate of young people in higher education. There is enormous variation within disciplines, universities, & across the higher education sector.

Regarding teaching, broadly, we might say that more teaching-focused universities (which before 1992 were 'polytechnics') tend to have a tradition of experiential learning, often attached to placements/internships. They often taught more vocational subjects such as engineering, textiles,

applied social studies, etc. The older, so-called 'Russell Group' of universities do not have this tradition of experiential learning as they traditionally had a solid academic curriculum. However, the boundaries between these two groups are increasingly blurred, and many Russell Group universities now offer vocational subjects such as nursing, which necessitates a considerable amount of experiential learning.
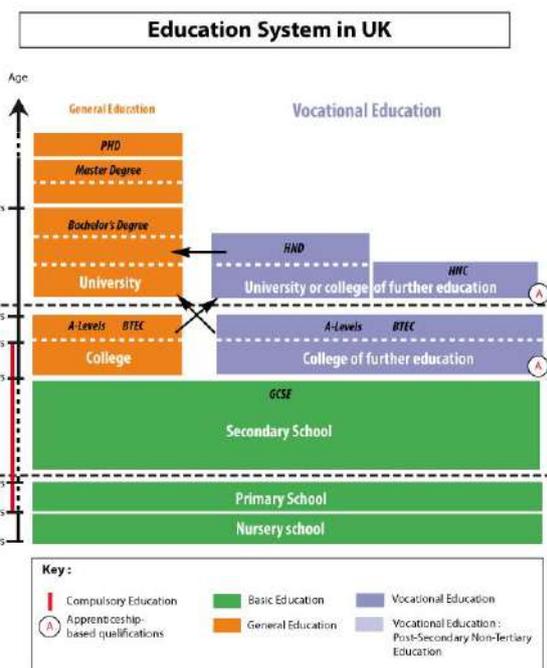
The physical infrastructure of UK universities often looks quite well set up for active learning approaches – especially the former polytechnics.

There are classrooms with round tables for project work, with laptops built-in;learning spaces that can be made bigger or smaller; open areas for break out work and displays; studio spaces, etc. There is a general move in the UK towards more active learning – whether this means experiential learning is another matter.

Historically the 'polytechnics' were locally funded and were established to meet the needs of the local labour market and so had strong local roots, including with civil society. These local roots have lost real significance since all universities became 'universities' in 1992. There are many excellent examples of universities/departments/courses with strong connections to local employers, local government, and civil society groups. Regarding diversity, the UK population is very diverse in terms of ethnic origin, first language, etc. UK universities attract a lot of international students & so our student body is diverse. There are currently a couple of national agendas aimed at managing diversity: 'Success for All' - recognizing that there are patterns of success in HE among certain groups, with black boys, for example, often doing less well than other students. And 'De-colonizing the curriculum' - seeking to build in much more ethnic and 'racial' diversity into the curriculum, recognizing subaltern knowledge and perspectives in the curriculum, excavating hidden knowledge.

Service-Learning can and should link very well to these diversity agendas. For example, students might work with local black and ethnic minority civil society organizations on a Service-Learning project, providing them with exposure to more diverse role models and local and alternative knowledge.

Andrea Lyons-Lewis (Senior Lecturer in Sociology & Service-Learning Lead for BA Criminology, Department of Sociology, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham)

The European Association EASLHE

The goal of the European Association for Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE) is to promote Service-Learning in higher education in Europe and to foster scholarly activities related to it. These include, but are not limited to the following activities:

- to disseminate information and knowledge about service-learning
- to foster and develop training activities and resources
- to establish links between local, transnational and global networks
- to organize meetings, seminars, conferences and other events, alone and/or with groupings
- to advocate service-learning development in higher education institutions
- to contribute to the development of policy recommendations and initiatives
- to support individuals and institutions in developing service-learning projects
- to conduct and encourage research and scientific publications on service-learning
- to raise funds, receive legacies and donations to realize the goals of the association

The General Assembly of the Association that took place in Antwerp on Saturday 21 September 2019, elected the first General Meeting, with representatives of Croatia, Belgium, Spain, Slovakia, United-Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Italy, The Netherlands, Rumania, and Portugal. Pilar Aramburuzala (Spain) was elected President of the Association.

Membership

To become a member of the association, you can apply at https://www.eoslhe.eu/easlhe-membership-subscription/ and for more detailed information, please visit us on https://www.eoslhe.eu/easlhe/

The **annual fee is 20,00€** with a student discount fare of 10,00€.

News and Events

The next conference **3rd European Conference on Service- Learning in Higher Education**, which will take place in **Bratislava, Slovakia, March 18-19, 2020** POSTPONED

The next conference **6th International Congress of Educational Research USAL-PALECH "CLIE 2020"** will take place on April1 - 3, 2020 the University of Salamanca, Spain. POSTPONED


The next conference **Research Agenda on Community Engagement and Service-Learning in geography in higher education** will take place in April 6 – 10, 2020, in Denver, Colorado, United States

The next conference **X National Congress and IV International Congress for University Service-Learning** will take place on June 3 - 5, 2020 in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain POSTPONED

The next conference **Engaged Universities: (De)constructing the Theory, Practice and Culture of Engagement in Higher Education** will take place September 2 – 4, 2020, in Rijeka/ Opatija, Croatia
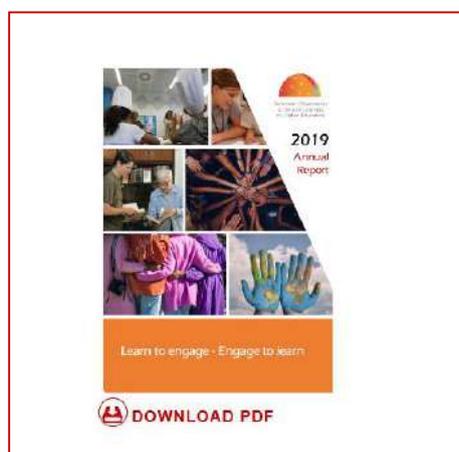
learn to engage – engage to learn

1st 2019 Annual Report of the European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education is now free available to download at:

https://www.eoslhe.eu/2019-annual-report/

- ✓ Experiences and networks
- ✓ European projects
- ✓ State-of-art by countries

European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education

Director: Pilar Aramburuzabala
Deputy-Director: Carlos Ballesteros
Coordinator: Marta Alonso
Researcher: Ana Cayuela

ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Aitziber Mugarra	Janine Bittner
Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová	Lucas Meijs
Nicolas Standaert	Wolfgang Stark
Cinzia Albanesi	Henrietta Gronlund
Nives Mikelic Preradovic	Maaike Mottart
Maria Vargas-Moniz	Héctor Opazo
Kate Morris	