



UNISERVITATE AWARD 2024 - Terms and Conditions

Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education

Rationale and call for submissions:

Educators cannot succeed fully in their educational action unless they commit to forming and shaping—in the people entrusted to their care—a full and real openness to the service of others, of all others, of the whole human community, starting with those who find themselves in the most exhausting and challenging situations. The true service of education is education to service. Moreover, educational research also increasingly recognizes the central dimension of service to others and the community as a tool and an end of education itself. Think, for example, about the great development of service-learning. This kind of research shows how service can be not only a training activity among others (the importance of volunteer work in the training of young people is well recognized), but more radically how it can become the fundamental method through which all knowledge and skills can be transmitted and acquired.

(Global Compact on Education: Vademecum, 2021, p. 34¹).

The *Uniservitate* Programme invites all Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) developing experiences that include *academic learning* in the students' *solidarity service to the community* to be part of the *Uniservitate Award 2024 "Solidarity Service-Learning in Catholic Higher Education."*

We define *solidarity service-learning (SL)* as experiences, projects, practices, courses, or institutional programmes, including the community and involving solidarity service with active student leadership, deliberately integrated with curriculum contents and research programmes. It is an educational methodology fostering meaningful learning and promoting problem-based learning to provide specific solutions while reinforcing holistic education.

Service-learning projects not only address various social and environmental needs but also optimize the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes by encouraging students to research and solidarity engage in a community context. The goal is to promote experiences that enhance the students' holistic education as responsible citizens, critical, creative and transforming protagonists of society, where they include their spiritual identity innovatively to become true agents of a "civilisation of love".

The *Uniservitate* Award aims to showcase and promote quality service-learning practices carried out, acknowledging experiences that account for measurable contributions to solve socio-environmental problems. These endeavours are identified and addressed in solidarity with organizations and community

¹ Global Compact on Education (2021), <https://ciec.edu.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Vademecum-Espan%CC%83ol-para-la-web.pdf>



beneficiaries, with the active participation of students in all project stages and a clear connection between service and educational planning. This planning includes specific links with the curriculum, opportunities for skills development, reflection and research.

The Award also aims to highlight progress in the institutionalization of service-learning, achieved when it becomes an ongoing, expected, valued and legitimate part of the knowledge nucleus and organizational culture of the institution. Thus, we believe that SL institutionalization requires not only the development of quality practices but also the establishment of institutional policies incorporating SL in the mission, policies, practices and budgets of the CHEIs.

This Award intends to contribute to the establishment and strengthening of such initiatives and their networks. Therefore, we encourage everyone to share their work, even if it appears modest or in its early stages.

The objectives of the award are as follows:

- Show and highlight the SL experiences that connect teaching, research and social projection in line with the primary mission of the CHEIs, combining science and faith, academic excellence and the tangible testimony of an Institution engaged with the community.
- Acknowledge and make visible the CHEIs that excel in including academic learning in solidarity service to the community.
- Showcase the SL experiences within Catholic Higher Education to contribute to their promotion, replication throughout the system, and widespread dissemination.
- Systematize the contributions of the SL experiences to enhance SL knowledge and its institutionalization and inclusion in the transforming spiritual dimension.
- Strengthen networks between Higher Education institutions and various civil society, governmental, community or private organizations, etc.
- Contribute to the training of professionals who understand the community's needs and are committed to building a fairer, more fraternal and caring society.

Terms and conditions

1- All Catholic Higher Education Institutions, whether university or non-university, that have developed or are developing service-learning projects or programmes since January 2021 are eligible to participate in the *Uniservitate Award 2024 "Solidarity Education Experiences in Catholic Higher Education Institutions"*. Hub universities from the *Uniservitate* network can submit experiences, but they will be assessed by evaluators from other institutions. Experiences already awarded in 2022 are not eligible for resubmission.

2- The *Uniservitate Award 2024* will reward each regional hub:

(a) Two (2) First prizes, each receiving €5000. The funds will be awarded to the winning institutions to further the experiences presented or develop new ones. Additionally, one (1) coordinating teacher and one (1) student will be



invited to participate in the V *Uniservitate* Symposium in the city of Rome (Italy) on 24th and 25th October 2024.

b) Two (2) Special Mentions of €1000 each to further the experiences presented or develop new ones.

All award winners are required to complete a report that will be sent to the regional hubs for administrative and pedagogical accountability of the funds 12 months after their reception.

The awards or mentions may be declared void if experiences have not been submitted or do not meet the conditions stipulated in these terms and conditions.

- 3- The deadline for submission is established according to the scheduled dates for each region.
- 4- To participate, submit your experience using the online form available at <https://www.uniservitate.org> (English) or <https://www.uniservitate.org/es/> (Spanish). For any queries, please contact: award@uniservitate.org
- 5- The form will be accepted when its submission is done via the *Uniservitate* website, with all mandatory fields completed.
- 6- The *Uniservitate Award 2024* will have two instances of experience presentation. The first, a synthetic form that all applicants must complete. Those who meet the requirements stipulated there will receive a second, more extensive form. There they can expand the information and must attach evidence or testimonies of the actions implemented so that they can provide the evaluators with a broader and clearer image of the experiences presented (photos, documentation, outreach material, links to multimedia, press, mentions, etc.).
- 7- The project's learning objectives will be taken into consideration when evaluating both forms. These objectives are assessed through criteria such as the link with the disciplinary contents to tackle a social problem, the integration of interdisciplinary contents, the use of skills and values, the learning of new knowledge and the capacity for feedback and self-evaluation.
- 8- Likewise, the solidarity service objectives of the project are assessed according to the following criteria: the advocacy of social justice and recognition of culture, the activity frequency, community satisfaction, the networking between institutions and local organizations, the project sustainability, the medium and long-term achievement of social change objectives.
- 9- In addition, those projects that are most clearly linked to the institutional identity and mission and contribute to students' spirituality and holistic education will receive a higher score.
- 10- In the event of winning the award, the institution authorities must specify where they are committed to investing the prize money. This money is given to the winning institution to develop and expand the submitted experience or



initiate a new one. It cannot be used to pay salaries or the institution's current expenditures.

- 11-** If more than one academic unit submits the experience, they should agree on the prize distribution. The educators and students of the awarded experiences registered on the form will receive certificates; in the case of first-prize winners, one educator and one student get a full scholarship to participate in the 5th *Uniservitate* Symposium in Rome on 24th and 25th October 2024.
- 12-** Participation in the *Uniservitate Award 2024* authorises the organizers to use and distribute the texts, images and other products submitted for cultural, dissemination, advertising or promotion purposes. We recommend sending pictures and audiovisual materials. The submission of photographs and personal data means that the sender is responsible for having the necessary permissions following the privacy legislation of their country.
- 13-** The experiences are assessed in the first and second stages by qualified SL evaluators selected by the responsible people of each *Uniservitate* Regional Hub, under the supervision of the CLAYSS team and the coordination of the *Uniservitate* Programme. The final decision regarding the winners in each region rests with a Regional Jury of experts.
- 14-** The winning educational experiences shall be announced by the end of June 2024.
- 15-** All participating institutions in the *Uniservitate Award 2024* accept the rules of this call, as well as the decisions of the Regional Jury, acting in the sole instance and with no option for appeal or reconsideration.