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UNISERVITATE
Aprendizaje-servicio solidario en la Educación Superior Católica

UNISERVITATE COLLECTION

Service-learning pedagogy and the teachings of the Catholic Church

Andrés Peregalli
M. Beatriz Isola
Card. Mario Aurelio Poli
Adam Biela
Dorota Kornas-Biela
Mariola Kozubek
Fr. Arkadiusz Wuwer
Xavier Alphonse, SJ

Sahaya G. Selvam, SDB
Brenda Kiema
Michelle Sterk Barrett
Italo Fiorin
Ellen Van Stichel
Yolanda Ruiz
Mariano García

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Service-learning pedagogy and the teachings of the Catholic Church

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General Coordination: María Nieves Tapia

Editorial Coordination: Jorge A. Blanco

Coordinators of this volume: M. Beatriz Isola and Andrés Peregalli

Proofreading and editing of texts in Spanish: Licy Miranda

Translation and editing of texts in English: Karina Marconi and Cecilia Mata

Design of the collection and of this volume: Adrián Goldfrid

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11. APPENDIX

Introduction

Here is a collection of quotations from Vatican documents that underpin the holistic education and social engagement of Catholic Institutions of Higher Education (ICHEs) for the common good.

It is possible to see a strong affinity between the texts selected and service-learning pedagogy, including explicit reference to it in the documents of the Global Compact on Education.

1. Integral Education and Social Mission of CHEIs

“Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy (...) Moreover they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organizations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good.” (Paul VI, 1965, GE n.1)

“(...) The students of [Catholic Higher Education] institutions are molded into men truly outstanding in their training, ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world (...).” (Paul VI, 1965, GE n.10)

“Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary search for meaning in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole. If it is the responsibility of every University to search for such meaning, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person.” (John Paul II, 1990, ECE n. 7)

“A Catholic University, as any University, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society.” (John Paul II, 1990, ECE n. 32)

“The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic University, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students. The Church is firmly committed to the integral growth of all men and women.” (John Paul II, 1990, ECE n. 34).

“Since, in many countries, the population of Catholic schools is characterized by a multiplicity of cultures and beliefs, religious formation in schools must be based on the awareness of the existing pluralism and constantly be able to be meaningful in contemporary society. This scenario is extremely diversified, therefore religion cannot be taught in the same way everywhere: in some situations, religion classes can provide the occasion where the Gospel is proclaimed for the first time; in other circumstances, educators will provide students the opportunity to experience interiority and prayer, prepare for the sacraments, and invite them to engage in youth movements or social service activities.” (CEC, 2014, 3 h)

“Catholic higher education aims at forming men and women who are able to engage in critical thinking, who are endowed with high level professionalism but also with rich humaneness, through which their skills are put to the service of the common good.” (CEC, 2014, 2 f)

“In particular, schools would not be a complete learning environment if, what pupils learnt, did not also become an occasion to serve the local community. (...) when students have the opportunity to experience how important what they learn is for their lives and their communities, their motivation does change. It would be advisable for teachers to provide their students with opportunities to realize the social impact of what they are studying, thus favoring the discovery of the link between school and life, as well as the development of a sense of responsibility and active citizenship.” (CEC, 2014, II 4)

“Teaching that only promotes repetitive learning, without favoring students’ active participation or sparking their curiosity, is not sufficiently challenging to elicit motivation. Learning through research and problem-solving develops different and more significant cognitive and mental abilities, whereby students do more than just receiving information, while also stimulating teamwork.” (CEC, 2014, n. 3)

“A humanized education, therefore, does not just provide an educational service, but deals with its results in the overall context of the personal, moral and social abilities of those who participate in the educational process. (...). It is an education – at the same time – that is sound and open, that pulls down the walls of exclusivity, promoting the richness and diversity of individual talents and extending the classroom to embrace every corner of social experience in which education can generate solidarity, sharing and communion.” (CEC, 2017, n. 10)

“Education to fraternal humanism has the weighty responsibility of providing a formation of citizens so as to imbue them with an appropriate culture of dialogue. Moreover, the intercultural dimension is frequently experienced in classrooms of all levels, as well as in universities, so it is from there that we must start to spread the culture of dialogue. The framework of values in which a citizen properly formed to dialogue lives, thinks and acts is supported by relational principles (spontaneity, freedom, equality, consistency, peace and the common good), which beneficially and decisively become part of educational and formation programmes of those institutions and agencies that nurture fraternal humanism.” (CEC, 2017, n. 14)

“Globalizing hope is the specific mission of education to fraternal humanism. A mission that is fulfilled through establishing educational and pedagogical relationships that form to Christian love, that create groups based on solidarity, in which the common good is connected virtuously to the good of each of their components, transforming the contents of knowledge in line with the full realization of the person and his or her belonging to humanity. It is precisely Christian education that can perform this most important task, because it ‘gives birth, it makes grow, it is part of the dynamics of giving life. And the origin of life is the most gushing spring of hope’” (CEC, 2017, n. 18)

“(...) it is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 86).

2. Pope Francis Teachings Related to Service-Learning Pedagogy

▶ On Integral Education

“There are three languages: the language of the head, the language of the heart, the language of the hands. Education must move on these three avenues. To teach

how to think, to help how to develop good affections, and to accompany in doing.”⁷²
(Papa Francesco, 2015)

“... harmonize the language of the mind with the language of the heart and the language of the hands so that a person, a child, a youth may think what he feels and what he does; may feel what he thinks and what he does; may do what he feels and what he thinks. Combine this harmony within the very person, in the student, and in universal harmony, so that we all undertake the educational pact and, in so doing, emerge from this crisis of civilization that we are living in, and take the step that civilization itself demands of us.” (Papa Francesco, 2015a).

▸ A Church going forward to the peripheries

“When the Church is closed, she falls sick. Think of a room that has been closed for a year. When you go into it there is a smell of damp, many things are wrong with it. A Church closed in on herself is the same, a sick Church. The Church must step outside herself. To go where? To the outskirts of existence, whatever they may be, but she must step out. Jesus tells us: “Go into all the world! Go! Preach! Bear witness to the Gospel!” (cf. Mk 16:15). But what happens if we step outside ourselves? The same as can happen to anyone who comes out of the house and onto the street: an accident. But I tell you, I far prefer a Church that has had a few accidents to a Church that has fallen sick from being closed. Go out, go out!” (Pope Francis, 2013a).

“Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.” (Pope Francis, 2013, EG 20)

“Here is my first challenge to you: leave the places where there are many educators and go to the outskirts. (...) Look there for the needy, the poor. And they have one thing that the young people in the richer neighbourhoods don’t have: it’s not their fault, but it’s a sociological reality: they have the experience of survival, even cruelty, even hunger, even injustice. They have a wounded humanity. And I believe that our salvation comes from the wounds of a wounded man on the cross. They, from those wounds, draw wisdom, if there is a good educator to carry them forward. It is not a matter of going there to do charity, to teach how to read, to give something to

⁷² English version retrieved from:
<https://www.stmarys-belfast.ac.uk/infoserv/news/inthepicture195.asp?cid=145250962045>

eat... no! This is necessary, but temporary. This is the first step. The challenge - and I encourage you - is to go there to make them grow in humanity, in intelligence, in values, in habits, so that they can move forward and bring to others experiences that they do not know.” (Pope Francis, 2015)⁷³

“The greatest failure an educator can have is educating within the walls. Educating within the walls of a selective culture, the walls of a culture of security, the walls of an affluent social sector that does not advance”. (Papa Francesco, 2015)⁷⁴

▸ Solidarity

“The university as a place of formation in solidarity. The word solidarity does not belong solely to a Christian vocabulary. It is a word that is fundamental to human vocabulary. As I said today it is a word which in the present crisis, risks being eliminated from the dictionary. The discernment of reality, by taking on the moment of crisis, and the promotion of a culture of encounter and dialogue, orientate us to solidarity as a fundamental element for a renewal of our societies. (...) There is no future for any country, for any society, for our world, unless we are able to show greater solidarity. Solidarity, then, as a way of making history, as a vital context in which conflicts, tensions, and even those who oppose one another attain a harmony that generates life.” (Pope Francis, 2013b, 2c)

“To you, young people, I especially entrust the task of restoring solidarity to the heart of human culture. Faced with old and new forms of poverty – unemployment, migration and addictions of various kinds – we have the duty to be alert and thoughtful, avoiding the temptation to remain indifferent. We have to remember all those who feel unloved, who have no hope for the future and who have given up on life out of discouragement, disappointment or fear. We have to learn to be on the side of the poor, and not just indulge in rhetoric about the poor! Let us go out to meet them, look into their eyes and listen to them. The poor provide us with a concrete opportunity to encounter Christ himself, and to touch his suffering flesh. However (...) the poor are not just people to whom we can give something. They have much to offer us and to teach us. How much we have to learn from the wisdom of the poor!” (Pope Francis, 2014)

“Education to fraternal humanism has the weighty responsibility of providing a formation of citizens so as to imbue them with an appropriate culture of dialogue. Moreover, the intercultural dimension is frequently experienced in classrooms of all levels,

73 Own translation.

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as well as in universities, so it is from there that we must start to spread the culture of dialogue. The framework of values in which a citizen properly formed to dialogue lives, thinks and acts is supported by relational principles (spontaneity, freedom, equality, consistency, peace and the common good), which beneficially and decisively become part of educational and formation programmes of those institutions and agencies that nurture fraternal humanism.” (CEC, 2017, n. 14)

“I would like especially to mention solidarity, which, “as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 114).

▶ Youth engagement

“You know, dear young university students, that we cannot live without facing challenges, without responding to challenges. Whoever does not face challenges, whoever does not take up challenges, is not living. Your willingness and your abilities, combined with the power of the Holy Spirit who abides in each of us from the day of Baptism, allow you to be more than mere spectators, they allow you to be protagonists in contemporary events. Please do not watch life go by from the balcony! Mingle where the challenges are calling you to help carry life and development forward, in the struggle over human dignity, in the fight against poverty, in the battle for values and in the many battles we encounter each day.” (Pope Francis, 2013c).

“At times, seeing a world so full of violence and selfishness, young people can be tempted to withdraw into small groups, shunning the challenges and issues posed by life in society and in the larger world. They may feel that they are experiencing fraternity and love, but their small group may in fact become nothing other than an extension of their own ego. This is even more serious if they think of the lay vocation simply as a form of service inside the Church: serving as lectors, acolytes, catechists, and so forth. They forget that the lay vocation is directed above all to charity within the family and to social and political charity. It is a concrete and faith-based commitment to the building of a new society. It involves living in the midst of society and the world in order to bring the Gospel everywhere, to work for the growth of peace, harmony, justice, human rights and mercy, and thus for the extension of God’s kingdom in this world.” (Pope Francis, 2019, ChV, n. 168)

“I ask young people to go beyond their small groups and to build “social friendship, where everyone works for the common good.” (Pope Francis, 2019, ChV n. 169)

“The Synod recognized that “albeit in a different way from earlier generations, social commitment is a specific feature of today’s young people. Alongside some who are indifferent, there are many others who are ready to commit themselves to initiatives of volunteer work, active citizenship and social solidarity. They need to be accompanied and encouraged to use their talents and skills creatively, and to be encouraged to take up their responsibilities. Social engagement and direct contact with the poor remain fundamental ways of finding or deepening one’s faith and the discernment of one’s vocation... It was also noted that the young are prepared to enter political life so as to build the common good.” (Pope Francis, 2019, ChV n. 170).

▸ **Catholic Universities have to go beyond the classroom, to use curriculum and research to engage their students in solving real world problems**

“My question to you, as educators, is this: Do you watch over your students, helping them to develop a critical sense, an open mind capable of caring for today’s world? A spirit capable of seeking new answers to the varied challenges that society sets before humanity today? Are you able to encourage them not to disregard the world around them, what is happening all over? Can you encourage them to do that? To make that possible, you need to take them outside the university lecture hall; their minds need to leave the classroom, their hearts must go out of the classroom. Does our life, with its uncertainties, its mysteries and its questions, find a place in the university curriculum or different academic activities?” (Pope Francis, 2015b)

“The classic methods of research are experiencing certain limits, more so when it is a question of a culture such as ours, which stimulates direct and immediate participation by all. Present-day culture demands new forms that are more inclusive of all those who make up social and hence educational realities. We see, then, the importance of broadening the concept of the educating community.

The challenge for the community is to not isolate itself from modes of knowledge, or, for that matter, to develop a body of knowledge with minimal concern about those for whom it is intended. It is vital that the acquisition of knowledge lead to an interplay between the university classroom and the wisdom of the peoples who make up this richly blessed land.

Knowledge must always sense that it is at the service of life, and must confront it directly in order to keep progressing. Hence, the educational community cannot be

reduced to classrooms and libraries but must progress continually towards participation. This dialogue can only take place on the basis of an episteme capable of “thinking in the plural”, that is, conscious of the interdisciplinary and interdependent nature of learning.” (Pope Francis, 2018)

“It is fair to ask ourselves: How do we help our students not to look at a university degree as synonym for more status, more money or more social prestige? They are not synonyms. Do we help them to see this preparation as a sign of greater responsibility for today’s problems, for the needs of the poorest, for the care of the environment? It is not enough to make analyses and descriptions of reality; it is necessary to generate spaces for real research, debates that generate alternatives to today’s problems. How necessary it is to get down to the concrete!” (Pope Francis, 2017, n.1)⁷⁵

“The basic mission of a University is a continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society. A Catholic University participates in this mission with its own specific characteristics and purposes.” (John Paul II, 1990, ECE 30)

“One could object that such a university lecturer draws conclusions from faith and therefore cannot claim that they are valid for those who do not share this faith. But while it is true that they do not share the faith, they can recognise the ethical reason proposed to them. Behind the Catholic teacher stands a community of believers, in which, over the centuries of its existence, a certain wisdom of life has matured; a community that holds within itself a treasure trove of knowledge and ethical experience, which is important for the whole of humanity. In this sense, the teacher speaks not so much as a representative of a belief, but above all, as a witness to the validity of ethical reason.” (Pope Francis, 2017, n.2)⁷⁶.

3. Service-Learning in the Global Compact on Education

“3. Educating to Serve, Educating is to Serve. Lastly, the third act of courage Pope Francis calls for is to form individuals who are willing to put themselves at the service of the community. To be honest, this indication sheds an apt light on a truly decisive element of every educational action: 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

75 Own translation.

76 Own translation.

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 as 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 be 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. We could point to this process as a development from education to service to education as service, whereby our brethren are both the way and the goal of education.” (CEC, 2020, p. 16).

“No authentic, profound and enduring change is possible unless it starts from the different cultures, particularly those of the poor. A cultural covenant eschews a monolithic understanding of the identity of a particular place; it entails respect for diversity by offering opportunities for advancement and social integration to all” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 220).

4. Education and fraternity

“It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. “Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together”.^[6] Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 8)

“A love capable of transcending borders is the basis of what in every city and country can be called “social friendship”. Genuine social friendship within a society makes true universal openness possible. This is a far cry from the false universalism of those who constantly travel abroad because they cannot tolerate or love their own people. Those who look down on their own people tend to create within society categories of first and second class, people of greater or lesser dignity, people enjoying greater or fewer rights. In this way, they deny that there is room for everybody.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 99)

“Education and upbringing, concern for others, a well-integrated view of life and spiritual growth: all these are essential for quality human relationships and for enabling society itself to react against injustices, aberrations and abuses of economic, technological, political and media power. Some liberal approaches ignore this factor of human weakness; they envisage a world that follows a determined order and is capable by itself of ensuring a bright future and providing solutions for every problem.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 167)

“Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns. Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others. Indeed, “in a true spirit of dialogue, we grow in our ability to grasp the significance of what others say and do, even if we cannot accept it as our own conviction. In this way, it becomes possible to be frank and open about our beliefs, while continuing to discuss, to seek points of contact, and above all, to work and struggle together.” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 203).

“What is important is to create processes of encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences. Let us arm our children with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter!” (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 217).

“The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between the followers of different religions does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. In the words of the Bishops of India, “the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love”. (Pope Francis, 2020, FT, 271).

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In support of the Global Compact on Education

Uniservitate is a global programme for the promotion of service-learning in Catholic Higher Education. It aims to generate a systemic change in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs), through the institutionalisation of service-learning (SL) as a tool to achieve its mission of an integral education and formation of agents of change committed to their community.

***“We will not change the world,
if we do not change education”***

Pope Francis

2 Service-learning pedagogy and the teachings of the Catholic Church

We are pleased to present the book *Service-learning pedagogy and the teachings of the Catholic Church*, a polyhedral text, born in different parts of the world, an expression of different voices and an invitation to reflect on Higher Education in view of a greater commitment to the universal human family. Its intention is to contribute to the generation of Higher Education Institutions (university and non-university, Catholic and non-confessional) capable of networking and generating life, of learning and generating meaning in their being and from their knowledge and doing, for others and with others, and not only cloisters that live for themselves. It is a text with a plural, global and diverse perspective, which opens up dialogue and builds bridges that contribute to achieving a more fraternal society.

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