

## Institutional Analysis of the University of Seville through Service-Learning

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### ABSTRACT

Introduction: Service-Learning (SL) has become established as an innovative pedagogical methodology that combines academic learning processes with community service and social engagement, thereby contributing to the holistic education of students. Despite its expansion within the Spanish university context, the degree of institutionalisation of SL varies considerably across institutions. At the University of Seville in particular, SL initiatives appear fragmented and poorly systematised, which hinders their visibility. This study aims to conduct an institutional diagnosis of SL at the University of Seville by identifying existing experiences, areas of development, gaps, sectors with low representation, and opportunities for improvement, and by proposing recommendations to enhance the visibility, coordination, and promotion of new SL initiatives. Method: The study adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach, combining documentary and institutional analysis. A systematic review of public sources from the University of Seville was conducted, including websites, annual reports, course syllabi, innovation funding calls, collaboration agreements, and documentation from vice-rectorates. Results: The findings reveal an uneven presence of SL, concentrated mainly in the fields of Social and Legal Sciences and Health Sciences, with limited formal curricular integration and a strong reliance on individual initiatives or specific funding calls. No explicit institutional policies or stable monitoring and evaluation systems were identified. Discussion: It is concluded that SL at the University of Seville is at an early stage of institutionalisation, characterised by substantial inequalities between faculties and the absence of shared mechanisms for dissemination. The need for institutional strategies to support recognition, curricular integration, staff training, and sustainability is emphasised. In this regard, the creation of an institutional system for the registration and visibility of SL experiences is proposed to enable systematic monitoring, evaluation, and dissemination, thereby strengthening their academic and social recognition.

**Keywords:** Service learning, University of Seville, Qualitative analysis, SL Methodology, Social transformation.

### INTRODUCTION

Service-Learning (hereinafter SL) has experienced sustained growth over the past two decades as an innovative pedagogical approach that links academic learning with community service, reinforcing civic participation, social responsibility, and democratic engagement. Within the university context, SL has become established as a high-impact methodology for both professional education and social transformation in specific settings through

collaborative projects between higher education institutions and community organisations (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019).

This approach is conceptually rooted in Pestalozzi's holistic education of head, heart, and hands; John Dewey's learning by doing; William Kilpatrick's project-based methodology; and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (Tapia et al., 2023).

Since the late twentieth century, SL has reached a significant level of institutionalisation in countries such as the United States and Argentina, subsequently expanding to other contexts, particularly Europe and Spain.

In North America, SL dissemination became firmly established in the United States, where initiatives such as Campus Compact (i.e., a coalition of approximately one thousand universities and colleges committed to the civic mission of higher education) provide institutional support for the integration of SL practices into teaching and research. In addition, research and promotion centres devoted to SL operate in universities such as the University of California, fostering research and the development of SL practices through bodies such as the National Service-Learning Partnership (NLSP) and the Service-Learning Research and Development Center (SL R&D Center). In most US universities (including Maryland, Colorado, Indiana, San Francisco, and Duke, among others), dedicated SL departments or units are in place.

In Ibero-America, SL development has been particularly dynamic and structured around specialised networks and centres. The Latin American Centre for Service-Learning (*Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario*, CLAYSS), originating in Argentina, has played a key role in promoting the theoretical, methodological, and practical dissemination of SL in higher education and other educational levels, fostering collaboration between educational institutions and social organisations (May & Tapia, 2024). CLAYSS was instrumental in the creation, in 2005, of the Ibero-American Service-Learning Network (REDIBAS), which brings together national networks from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico, and Portugal, as well as governmental bodies, universities, associations, and civil society organisations from Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, in addition to international organisations from the United States, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Paraguay, and Venezuela.

In Europe, although SL adoption occurred later than in the Americas, it has developed notably over the past twenty years, particularly in higher education. The European Association of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EASLHE) and networks emerging from initiatives such as Uniservitate have encouraged academic exchange and the consolidation of SL practices across European universities. Similarly, SL dissemination has been promoted through specific organisations in different European contexts, such as *Lernen durch Engagement* in Germany, Movisie in the Netherlands, and *Apprendre en s'engageant* in Switzerland. All these associations and networks focus on promoting educational practices that integrate service and learning with a strong community and social orientation (McIlrath et al., 2019).

In Spain, the Spanish Service-Learning Network (REDAPS) and the University Service-Learning Association (ApSU) have become consolidated, coordinating territorial and sectoral networks inspired by SL values such as trust, cooperation, respect, and social commitment. Several Spanish universities, including the University of Navarra, Barcelona, Vic, Seville, Santiago de Compostela, and Valencia, have developed integrated SL practices encompassing teaching, research, and staff development, making progress toward institutionalisation within curricula and fostering academic communities centred on SL practice (Martínez-Odría et al., 2024).

SL can be defined as an educational approach that supports university students in developing personal qualities by offering opportunities to learn and practise civic engagement, enhancing their sense of social responsibility. It combines academic learning processes with community service within a structured programme in which participants are trained while working on real needs in their local environment, with the aim of optimising and transforming it by focusing on localised problems and settings open to experimentation (Kiers et al., 2020). Students engage in organised service activities that address community-identified needs and, in some cases, contribute to community empowerment (Bandi et al., 2021; Farooq et al., 2017; Farooq et al., 2018; Leung, 2016; Meyer et al., 2016; Osman & Petersen, 2010; Treviño & Cobreros Rodríguez, 2019). Ultimately, the objective of SL is for students to understand the relationship between community needs, their dynamics, and curricular outcomes (Jordaan & Mennega, 2022).

From this perspective, the role of faculty members is crucial, as the integration of critical reflection into teaching enables students to interpret their learning experiences and assume social responsibility. This reflective process promotes awareness of both learning processes and the social impact of educational action (García Romero & Lalueza, 2019; Petrov, 2013), contributing to the development of socially responsible citizens (Rego et al., 2020) and generating benefits not only for students, but also for faculties, employers, and the communities involved (Chan, 2012).

It is important to distinguish this pedagogical approach from other initiatives with clear solidarity-oriented intentions but questionable educational impact, as well as from experiences that are clearly educational but have limited social impact. SL is neither simply volunteering nor a practicum, as it explicitly includes both service and

learning objectives. Similarly, not all university social responsibility initiatives can be considered SL experiences. Some institutional programmes developed by teaching teams or technical staff do not involve direct student participation. However, all SL experiences are, by definition, a specific expression of university social responsibility (Tapia & Peregalli, 2020). Table 1 illustrates the differences between SL, volunteering, and community service.

**Table 1. Differences of Service-Learning with volunteering and community service**

SERVICE-LEARNING	VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
Pedagogical-solidarity approach and teaching-learning methodology	Solidarity-oriented approach
Service objectives and learning objectives	Service objectives
Professional and civic education	Civic education
Requires preparation, action, and reflection phases	Consists of the activity itself
Established standards for service performance	No established standards
Requires advance planning prior to service delivery	May occur at any time
Requires appropriate adult supervision	May occur without adult supervision
Service accreditation certificate	Not required

Note. Developed by author

In this regard, universities play a pivotal role in achieving not only professional growth but also broader economic and social development beyond instructional processes and teaching–learning dynamics. The university’s mission is directed toward developing internal mechanisms that promote high levels of scientific output while also educating students with excellent technical skills and strong personal, social, and civic competences to respond to a society that demands creativity, solidarity, and social justice. SL represents the exercise of citizenship by addressing not only the pursuit of scientific and technological knowledge, but also the application of activities aimed at solving problems and responding to community needs (Castanheira Pais et al., 2022). Thus, the university’s third mission entails a commitment to the communities in which it is embedded, identifying weaknesses or challenges, recognising existing resources, and collaborating in the design and implementation of solutions that foster social change.

Accordingly, SL as a pedagogical approach is particularly valuable because engaged students involve communities, and engaged communities collaborate in local development and contribute to generating new research within universities. Students come to realise that learning extends beyond institutional settings and that acquired knowledge can be applied in other spheres of life. Moreover, SL is associated with a conception of learning as a social process that includes dialogue among teaching staff, students, and the community.

Consequently, the literature shows that when academic learning is integrated with community experience, students develop both social and academic skills while cultivating a critical awareness of real-world issues, all of which are considered beneficial for the transition into the labour market (Bermúdez Aguilar & González Sosa, 2022; Holland & Madey, 2019; Rodríguez-Gallego, 2014). In the same vein, teaching staff identify teamwork, communication skills, and personal development across personal, social, and professional domains as key benefits of SL programmes (Rodríguez-Gallego & Ordóñez-Sierra, 2015).

According to Martínez-Odría (2007), high-quality university education cannot dissociate professional training from civic education. This claim is grounded in three main arguments: first, the contemporary concept of university education itself; second, the role of social cohesion that universities should assume beyond mere competitiveness; and third, contributions from research on moral development and ethical learning. From this perspective, high-quality SL practice must integrate rigorous academic learning with carefully planned solidarity-oriented action, aimed at generating a positive and meaningful impact on the community.

In line with this approach, promoting research, staff development, and the institutionalisation of SL in higher education has become a shared priority among numerous universities and academic networks worldwide. Both transnational collaborative experiences (for example, entrepreneurial education and service-learning projects between universities in the United States and Spain) and recent bibliometric studies highlight that this pedagogical approach responds to the need for holistic education, engagement with the social environment, and preparation to address complex global challenges.

Within the context of the University of Seville, there are isolated SL experiences that lack a high level of institutionalisation, are based on small samples, and involve limited evaluation processes. This situation underlines the need for a systematic study of this methodological approach, with the primary aim of conducting an institutional diagnosis of SL at the University of Seville, including the mapping of faculties, degree programmes, projects, and levels of institutionalisation.

## Objectives

- a) To collect publicly available information from institutional websites, agreements, and portals on SL projects at the University of Seville.
- b) To classify projects according to criteria such as faculty, compulsory or optional status, duration, beneficiary population, and thematic focus (social, environmental, educational, health-related, etc.).
- c) To analyse the degree of institutionalisation of SL within the university, including the existence of institutional policies, support centres, academic recognition, and continuity over time.
- d) To identify gaps, imbalances, or sectors with low SL representation.
- e) To propose recommendations to enhance the visibility, coordination, and promotion of new SL experiences in faculties without an established tradition, and to suggest mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretative methodological approach, combining documentary research with institutional analysis. This choice responds to the need to gain an in-depth understanding of the normative, organisational, and pedagogical discourses related to the object of study, as well as the internal dynamics that shape the institutional reality of the University of Seville's own centres.

Firstly, documentary research is approached as a systematic and reflexive process aimed at locating, selecting, evaluating, and analysing primary and secondary sources. As noted by Bowen (2009) and Flick (2018), documentary analysis enables the examination of official texts, regulations, strategic plans, institutional reports, and scientific literature, which constitute relevant data sources and facilitate the identification of patterns, categories, and interpretative frameworks. In the present study, the analysis was deliberately limited to the University of Seville's own centres. This delimitation is primarily justified by the extensive volume and complexity of the institutional documentary analysis required, which demands an exhaustive, systematic, and context-sensitive examination of regulations, strategic plans, reports, and other official documents. Focusing on the university's own centres ensured analytical depth, methodological coherence, and the reliability of the findings, while avoiding an overly extensive approach that could compromise the rigour of the study. Furthermore, this methodological decision guarantees the homogeneity of the institutional framework analysed and facilitates the interpretation of the findings in relation to the specific organisational and academic dynamics of the university under study.

Secondly, institutional analysis constitutes a key strategy for uncovering organisational dynamics, tensions, and power structures. This approach enables a detailed description of the institution in order to understand its processes of institutionalisation. The integration of documentary research and institutional analysis is grounded in Denzin's (1978) principle of methodological triangulation, which enhances internal validity and the credibility of the findings by contrasting multiple sources and techniques, thereby supporting the construction of more robust and transferable explanations (Yin, 2018).

From an epistemological standpoint, this study is situated within the interpretative–constructivist paradigm, which assumes that institutional reality is socially constructed and that knowledge is generated through the reflexive interaction between researchers, documents, and the institution itself. In sum, the combination of documentary research and institutional analysis is considered an appropriate methodological response to the complexity of the object of study, allowing for a comprehensive approach to educational and institutional processes. This methodological choice is firmly supported by the scientific literature and ensures rigour, epistemological coherence, and academic relevance.

The research process is structured into a set of sequential and interrelated phases that enable the identification, systematisation, and analysis of SL experiences at the University of Seville, as well as an assessment of their degree of institutionalisation.

Phase 1. Documentary review and website navigation: University portals, faculty websites, teaching innovation reports, community engagement service pages, agreements with NGOs, and related sources were systematically explored. All identified SL experiences were recorded. Documentary analysis was conducted through manual searches in official repositories and digital search tools, including artificial intelligence–based tools. Among these,

generative AI systems such as ChatGPT and Gemini were used to support keyword searches, the identification of institutional documents, and information organisation. These tools were employed solely as technical support for the search process and did not intervene in analytical decision-making or data interpretation, which remained the exclusive responsibility of the research team.

Phase 2. Construction of a database/recording table: A database was created including variables such as faculty, academic year, responsible staff, type of service, and target population.

Phase 3. Quantitative and qualitative analysis: Quantitative analysis examined the number of projects per faculty, thematic distribution, type of service, and continuity over time. In parallel, qualitative analysis of institutional documentation was conducted, focusing on policies, regulations, evidence of institutional support, and the degree of systematisation.

Phase 4. Diagnosis and proposal: Based on the analyses, a report was produced outlining the “SL map” of the University of Seville, identifying gaps and formulating recommendations to enhance institutionalisation, dissemination, evaluation, and sustainability.

## Sample

The study sample consisted of a set of SL experiences identified within the University of Seville’s own centres. These experiences were selected through a systematic search and documentary analysis of institutional sources, which enabled the identification and classification of initiatives according to variables such as field of knowledge, faculty, BSc programmes (single and double degrees), MSc programmes, the courses involved, responsible departments, and the university offices and services of the University of Seville and the University Community Assistance Service (SACU) associated with these experiences. The sample was intentional and non-probabilistic, selected on the basis of previously established criteria: (a) experiences had to be formally documented in institutional records, academic reports, vice-rectorates, or the Institute of Education Sciences; (b) they had to be implemented within official undergraduate or postgraduate programmes, projects, or courses; and (c) they had to demonstrate an explicit link between educational objectives and a social or community-based intervention. This selection strategy allowed constructing a corpus of experiences sufficiently representative of SL use within the institutional context analysed, while ensuring the feasibility and depth of the documentary analysis. In cases where an experience was interdisciplinary in nature, classification was based on the centre responsible for its implementation and the official field of knowledge to which that centre belongs.

The identified experiences were initially classified according to organisational and academic variables. Subsequently, an analytical categorisation process was conducted to interpret the characteristics and patterns of SL practices (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Distribution of Service-Learning experiences in the University of Seville’s own centres.**

Field of knowledge	Faculty	Type of educational initiative	Academic year	Responsible institutional unit	No. of experiences
Arts and Humanities	Philology	Subject	2014	Philology	1
	Philosophy	Project	2018	Philosophy	1
Social and Legal Sciences	Education Sciences	Subjects	13-14	Education Sciences	2
	Education Sciences	Workshops and seminars	19-25	Education Sciences	3
	Communication	Subjects	18-25	Communication	4
	Communication	Workshops	2023	Communication	1
	Economics and Business	Seminar	2023	Economics and Business	1
	Law	Subject	17-25	Law	1
	Tourism and Finance	Project	24-25	Tourism and Finance	1
Health Sciences	Psychology	Subjects	2010 2020	Psychology	1
Health Sciences	Psychology	Conference	2025	Psychology	1
	Pharmacy	Course	2022	Pharmacy	1
		Project	22-24	Pharmacy	1

Field of knowledge	Faculty	Type of educational initiative	Academic year	Responsible institutional unit	No. of experiences
		Workshop	23-24	Pharmacy	1
	Medicine	Project	22-24	Medicine	1
	Nursery, Physiotherapy and Podiatry	Subject	24-25	Nursing, Physiotherapy and Podiatry	1
Engineering and Architecture	School of Architecture	Subject project	21-22	School of Architecture	2
	School of Computer Engineering	Projects	24-25	School of Computer Engineering	2
Cross-sectional	Various faculties	Institutional projects	16-25	Vice-rectorates / Office for Development Cooperation / AACID	6
Cross-sectional	Various faculties	Training courses (ICE / MOOC)	17-24	Institute of Education Science – University of Seville	8
<b>Total</b>					<b>39</b>

Note. Developed by author.

The organisation of Table 2 highlights the disciplinary and temporal diversity of the analysed corpus, facilitating the interpretation of results in relation to the educational contexts in which the experiences are implemented across different fields of knowledge. Notably, Social and Legal Sciences account for the highest number of experiences ( $n = 13$ ), followed by Health Sciences ( $n = 7$ ).

## RESULTS

In order to contextualise the process of identifying SL experiences, a concise description of the institutional context, academic structure, and educational provision of the University of Seville is presented below. This provides the institutional framework within which the documentary search was conducted.

### Descriptive institutional results

To contextualise the study findings, it is first necessary to briefly situate the University of Seville as an institution. Founded at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the establishment of the Colegio de Santa María de Jesús by Maese Rodrigo, the University has a long and consolidated historical trajectory. Over time, it has evolved into a public university with an innovative profile, firmly embedded in its social environment and oriented towards educational quality, research excellence, and knowledge transfer (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Academic structure and educational provision of the University of Seville.**

Dimension	Description
Own centres	27 centres (19 faculties, 6 schools, 1 International Doctoral School, and 1 International Postgraduate School)
Affiliated centres	5 centres (1 publicly owned, and 4 private)
Departments	134
Fields of knowledge	158
Undergraduate degrees	106 programmes (89 in own centres and 17 in affiliated centres)
Master's degrees	117 programmes (including double degrees)
Doctoral programmes	32
Complementary provision	Language Institute (11 languages) and 4 programmes within the <i>Aula de la Experiencia</i>

Note. The data correspond to the academic structure and educational provision of the University of Seville.

**Results of the documentary search and analysis of SL experiences/courses**

The University of Seville is organised into five fields of knowledge: Arts and Humanities; Social and Legal Sciences; Sciences; Health Sciences; and Engineering and Architecture. The *Arts and Humanities* field includes the faculties of History, Philosophy, Philology, Geography and History, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Fine Arts, and Conservation and Restoration. The field of *Social and Legal Sciences* comprises Law, Economics, Business Administration and Management, Sociology, Political Science, Social Work, Tourism and Finance, Education Sciences, Communication, and Psychology. The *Sciences* field encompasses Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Geology, and Environmental Sciences. *Health Sciences* include Medicine, Nursing, Physiotherapy and Podiatry, Pharmacy, and Psychology. Lastly, the *Engineering and Architecture* field includes the Schools of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Building Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Agricultural Engineering. Table 4 presents the SL experiences identified by field of knowledge, faculty or centre, educational modality, and year.

**Table 4. Service-Learning experiences identified by field of knowledge, faculty, educational modality, and year.**

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Educational modality	Year
Arts and Humanities	Philology	Subject "Literature and society: Service-Learning (SL)". Degree in Hispanic Philology	2014
	Philosophy	BOECIO project. Applied philosophy with vulnerable groups	2018
Social and Legal Sciences	Education Sciences	Subject "Service-Learning as a methodological strategy at university". Degree in Primary Education	2013
		Subject "A Service-Learning experience in Learning Communities". Degree in Primary Education.	2014
		Training workshops in Service-Learning for associations	2019
		IX ECOshowUS conference. The ECO method: resonant innovation from an emotional perspective within the framework of the SDGs	2022
		Seminar "Knowledge transfer: contributions to socio-educational development: through SL"	2025
	Communication	Subject "Advertising in Economic and Social Sectors". Degree in Advertising and Public Relations	2025
		Subject "Advertising Creativity". Degree in Advertising and Public Relations	
		Subject "Cyberculture". Double Degree in Journalism and Audiovisual Communication	
		Subject "Communication Offices". Degree in Journalism	
		Conference "Service-Learning and Communication: perspectives from feminism, intersectionality, and the media". Degree in Communication	2023
	Economics and Business	Seminar "Putting Final Degree Projects at the service of society through Service-Learning"	2023
	Law	Subject "External Placements". Degree in Law	17-25
	Tourism and Finance	Event: Venezuelan Cultural Entrepreneurship Fair	2025
Health Sciences	Psychology	Subject "Data Design and Analysis". Degree in Psychology	2010
		Subject "Educational Psychology". Degree in Psychology	2020
	Pharmacy	Project "MicroMundo@Sevilla" (Service-Learning and citizen science)	22-24
	Pharmacy	First Teaching Innovation Conference (RADIF) with a specific SL session	23-24
	Medicine	Project "MicroMundo@Sevilla" (inter-faculty participation)	22-24
	Nursing, Physiotherapy and Podiatry	Subject "Physiotherapy in Early Intervention". Degree in Physiotherapy	24-25
Engineering and Architecture	School of Architecture	Project "Service-Learning SDGs in the design of safe school routes in the San Jerónimo neighbourhood (Seville)"	2021
	School of Architecture	Subject "Energy Regulation and Certification". Degree in Architecture Fundamentals	21-22

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Educational modality	Year
	School of Computer Engineering	Project “ROBOTÍZATE ( <i>robotise yourself</i> ): Promoting STEM with a gender perspective”	2024
	School of Computer Engineering	Project “Promoting the value of positive migration in Spain” (inter-faculty)	24-25

Note. Developed by author based on the institutional documentary analysis.

The course syllabi of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes do not explicitly incorporate SL as a formally identified and assessable teaching methodology. The absence of evidence in syllabi, official programmes, and publicly accessible academic repositories does not necessarily indicate that no SL-oriented educational experiences have taken place. Rather, it suggests that, where such experiences exist, they have not been formally embedded in curricula or reflected in publicly consulted documentation. A similar situation is observed in official master’s programmes at the University of Seville, where such activities are not explicitly or formally documented. This does not imply the absence of socially oriented practices, but rather indicates that SL has been institutionalised primarily at undergraduate level, is also channelled through teaching innovation projects, networks, and cooperation initiatives, and has not yet been incorporated as a declared methodology within official master’s programmes. As shown in Tables 2 and 4, four fields of knowledge have publicly reported SL projects or activities in recent years: Arts and Humanities; Social and Legal Sciences; Engineering and Architecture; and Health Sciences. These experiences are concentrated in 13 of the 27 own centres, specifically: Philology; Education Sciences; Communication; Economics and Business; Law; Tourism and Finance; Psychology; Pharmacy; Medicine; Nursing, Physiotherapy and Podiatry; the School of Architecture; and the School of Computer Engineering.

**Table 5. Institutional Service-Learning projects promoted by offices/agencies and vice-rectorates of the University of Seville.**

Responsible institutional unit	Year / period	Project or initiative title	Field of knowledge	Observations
Vice-Rectorate for Social Services, Healthy Campus, Equality and Cooperation / Office for Development Cooperation (US)	2016–2017	Call for Grants for Development Cooperation Activities and Projects (Service-Learning / Research-Service modality) (Faculty of Physics)	Cross-sectional	Institutional call oriented towards projects with social impact
	2018–2019	Design, support, and implementation of Service-Learning projects for disadvantaged children and migrants at risk of social exclusion in Seville (Faculty of Communication)	Cross-sectional	Institutional call for university training in communication with real social intervention
	2022	Hate speech against migrant populations among secondary education students in multicultural classrooms. Community empowerment and social transformation through Participatory Action Research using <i>Photovoice</i> (Faculty of Psychology)	Cross-sectional	Cooperation project including dissemination events for SL experiences
	2023–2025	Strengthening the Andalusian Third Sector in communication, ICT, and social innovation through service-learning by female university students (Faculty of Communication)	Cross-sectional	Gender equality through women’s participation in the Third Sector and Social Economy via SL
Vice-Rectorate for Students	2017–2018	Support for coordination and teaching innovation (institutional origin of the Legal Clinic at the Faculty of Law)	Cross-sectional	Institutional initiative promoting a compulsory SL experience
Vice-Rectorate for Teaching	2023–2026	Call for Support for Coordination and Teaching Innovation (Modality B, ref. 221)	Cross-sectional	Institutional framework for consolidating SL across different fields
Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation	2020	KRINEIN Project, Faculty of Philosophy (code 2020UE003)	Cross-sectional	Focused on critical thinking applied to international cooperation, volunteering, and social intervention. Includes SL experiences

Note. Developed by author based on the institutional documentary analysis.

Overall, a sustained development of SL-oriented experiences and projects is observed, driven both by individual academic initiatives and by cooperation and teaching innovation projects. However, the University Community Assistance Service (SACU) of the University of Seville promotes volunteering and social engagement programmes that offer academic recognition and share service objectives and competence development goals with SL methodology, although these were not identified in the systematised documentary sources as formal SL experiences. As shown in Table 5, the Vice-Rectorate for Social Services, Healthy Campus, Equality and Cooperation (Office for Development Cooperation), the Vice-Rectorate for Students, the Vice-Rectorate for Teaching, and the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation are the offices, agencies, and vice-rectorates of the University of Seville that support cross-sectional SL experiences.

**Table 6. Service-Learning training courses delivered through the ICE of the University of Seville / MOOCs or online courses.**

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Year	Course title
Arts and Humanities	Philosophy	2022	Service-Learning as a methodology for experiential and social learning: Basic principles and project design
Social and Legal Sciences	Education Sciences	2017	Proposal for Service-Learning training for university teaching staff
	Education Sciences	2020	Design and implementation of Service-Learning projects
	Education Sciences	2020	Principles and foundations of university Service-Learning
	Education Sciences	2022	Service-Learning as a methodology for experiential and social learning: Basic principles and project design
	Education Sciences	2022–2023	Teaching Innovation Network through Service-Learning on the Third Sector of Communication (Red-TSC)
	Education Sciences	2023–2024	Educational entrepreneurship and Service-Learning
	Communication	2022–2023	Teaching Innovation Network through Service-Learning on the Third Sector of Communication (Red-TSC)
Health Sciences	Pharmacy	2022–2024	Foundations and resources for the implementation and evaluation of university Service-Learning programmes
	Medicine	2022–2024	MOOC. Training and Service-Learning (SL) for the promotion of resilient university communities from local approaches based on GED, HRBA, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability
Architecture and Engineering	Higher Technical School of Agricultural Engineering	2024	Teaching improvement and training group of the ETSIA. Learning and Service at the University

Note. Developed by author based on the institutional documentary analysis.

As shown in Table 6, the Faculty of Education Sciences clearly leads training initiatives aimed at familiarising teaching staff and students with the Service-Learning methodology, designing a wide range of courses and disseminating them through the Teaching Innovation Network. To a lesser extent, training activities are also offered by the Faculties of Communication, Pharmacy, Medicine and the Higher Technical School of Agricultural Engineering.

**Table 7. Service-Learning projects/resources awarded under the Call for Support for Coordination and Teaching Innovation at the University of Seville**

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Year (call)	Project title
Social and Legal Sciences	Labour Sciences	2020–2021	Teaching resource “Inclusive methodological strategy: Service-Learning in Social Work”
	Law	2022–2023	Legal clinics of the Faculty of Law
	Law	2024–2025 / 2025–2026	Implementation and development of the Service-Learning methodology in legal sciences through an interdisciplinary study of the concept of vulnerability

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Year (call)	Project title
	Education Sciences	2020–2021	Design and implementation of Service-Learning projects
	Education Sciences	2024–2025	SL 360° in university education: future teachers at the service of the school environment
	Tourism and Finance	2025–2026	Promoting Service-Learning (SL) at the University of Mbuji mayi and the University of Seville
Sciences	Sciences	2024–2025	Development of sustainability competences through Game-Based Learning (GBL), Service-Learning (SL) and outdoor learning
Health Sciences	Pharmacy	2024	Teaching innovation project “FARMAESCAPE: The legacy”
	Pharmacy	2024–2025	Health agents on campus: Service-Learning for the promotion of healthy habits in the university community
Engineering and Architecture	ETSI – Computer Engineering	2022–2023	Exploring the feasibility of implementing the Service-Learning methodology in degree programmes at the ETSI Computer Engineering
	School of Architecture (ETSAS/ETSA)	2023–2024	Teaching staff network for the inclusion of Service-Learning in the training of agents for architectural, urban and territorial action (RED-PASAUT 2023)
	School of Architecture	2024–2025	Consolidation of the teaching staff network for the inclusion of Service-Learning in the training of agents for architectural, urban and territorial action and its instrumentalisation (RED-PASAUT_MED)
	School of Architecture	2024–2025	Incorporation of architecture students into the dissemination, documentation and stewardship of modern movement architecture and urbanism through Service-Learning with the Docomomo Ibérico Foundation
	School of Architecture	2024–2026	RAPSODIA. Service-Learning Network oriented towards teaching and action-research in architecture

Note. Developed by author based on the institutional documentary analysis.

Regarding the projects presented in Table 7, which correspond to Service-Learning initiatives awarded under the Call for Support for Coordination and Teaching Innovation at the University of Seville between the academic years 2020 and 2026, Arts and Humanities is the only field of knowledge with no awarded projects in these calls. All other fields are represented, with Social and Legal Sciences once again leading the call, followed by Engineering and Architecture.

The search of the institutional website of the University of Seville for Service-Learning projects awarded under the Call for Support for Coordination and Teaching Innovation began in the 2012-2013 academic year. However, it was not possible to access information relating to teaching innovation projects approved in the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 calls due to the absence of available documentation in the institutional repositories consulted.

**Table 8. General characteristics of Service-Learning experiences at the University of Seville.**

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Year	Nature	Duration	Beneficiary population	Type of service	Thematic focus
Arts and Humanities	Philology	2014	Subject	Annual	Educational and cultural community	Sociocultural intervention	Literature, society and social commitment
	Philosophy	2018	Project	Annual	Vulnerable groups	Applied philosophy	Ethics, critical thinking and inclusion
Social and Legal Sciences	Education Sciences	2013–2014	Subject	Annual	Educational community	Educational intervention	School organisation and learning communities
		2019	Conference	One-off	Associations and third sector	Training and knowledge transfer	Service-Learning training

Field of knowledge	Faculty / Centre	Year	Nature	Duration	Beneficiary population	Type of service	Thematic focus
		2022	Conference	One-off	Educational community	Educational innovation	ECO method and SDGs
		2025	Seminar	One-off	Academic community	Knowledge transfer	Socio-educational development
	Communication	2018–2025	Subjects	Annual	Social organisations and third sector	Training	Social advertising and community communication
		2023	Conference	One-off	Academic and social community	Awareness-raising	Feminism, intersectionality and media
	Economics and Business	2023	Seminar	One-off	Social organisations	Academic consultancy	Final Degree Projects and social responsibility
	Law	2017–2025	Subject	Ongoing	Citizens and vulnerable groups	Legal service	Access to justice and social responsibility
	Tourism and Finance	2025	Event	One-off	Migrant community	Sociocultural promotion	Entrepreneurship and migration
		2024–2025	Project	Multiannual	Migrant community	Sociocultural intervention	Positive migration
Health Sciences	Psychology	2010	Subject	Annual	University community	Psychoeducational support	Data analysis and service
		2020	Subject	Annual	Educational community	Psychoeducational intervention	Educational psychology
		2025	Lecture	One-off	Academic community	Awareness-raising	Cooperativism and Service-Learning
	Pharmacy	2022	Course	One-off	University teaching staff	Teacher training	Service-Learning methodology
		2022–2024	Project	Multiannual	Educational centres	Citizen science	Antimicrobial resistance
		2023–2024	Conference	One-off	Academic community	Teaching innovation	Innovation and Service-Learning
	Medicine	2022–2024	Project	Multiannual	Educational centres	Health education	Microbiology and public health
	Nursing, Physiotherapy and Podiatry	2024–2025	Subject	Annual	Children and families	Socio-health intervention	Early care
Engineering and Architecture	School of Architecture	2021	Project	Annual	Educational and neighbourhood community	Participatory design	Urban planning and school mobility
	School of Architecture	2021–2022	Subject	Annual	Community	Technical consultancy	Energy and sustainability
	ETSI Computer Engineering	2024	Project	Annual	Children and youth	STEM education	Gender equality
	ETSI Computer Engineering	2024–2025	Project	Multiannual	Migrant community	Sociocultural intervention	Positive migration

Note. Developed by author based on the institutional documentary analysis.

Table 8 classifies the projects according to several criteria. First, the nature of the activity is specified for each faculty (seminar, course, conference, event or project). Duration is categorised as annual, multiannual, ongoing or one-off. Beneficiary populations include the academic community, social organisations and the third sector, vulnerable groups, children and families, and youth, among others. The type of service comprises training, consultancy, social intervention, awareness-raising, knowledge transfer or education. Finally, the thematic focus is identified (e.g. socio-educational development, justice and social responsibility, Service-Learning methodology,

education, innovation, energy and sustainability, gender equality). The table illustrates the diversity of beneficiary populations, service types and thematic foci across the four fields of knowledge: Arts and Humanities (2 experiences), Social and Legal Sciences (10 experiences), Health Sciences (8 experiences), and Engineering and Architecture (4 experiences), with no experiences identified in the field of Sciences. Of the 18 activities recorded, 7 are annual (38.8%), 6 are one-off (33.3%) and 4 are multiannual (22.2%).

Social and Legal Sciences stands out as the field with the highest number of faculties that have developed a range of Service-Learning activities over recent years. In particular, the Faculties of Education Sciences, Communication and Law feature prominently in institutional repositories and press releases documenting conferences, workshops, award ceremonies and other activities, as well as Service-Learning projects and training courses.

Analysis of the databases providing information on the allocation of funding corresponding to the 2017, 2020 and 2022 calls reveals that only one or two activities were implemented during those periods. By contrast, from the 2023-2024 academic year onwards there has been a significant change, with a substantial increase in the number of activities carried out in recent academic years.

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained from the institutional documentary analysis place the development of Service-Learning (SL) at the University of Seville at an incipient stage of institutionalisation. This stage is characterised by an uneven presence across fields of knowledge and faculties, as well as a marked reliance on individual initiatives or on specific programmes promoted by certain institutional units. This finding is consistent with the literature, which emphasises that the institutionalisation of SL does not occur in a homogeneous or automatic manner, but rather through gradual processes shaped by organisational culture, academic leadership and the regulatory support of each university (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019; McIlrath et al., 2019).

With regard to the *first objective of the study, the collection of publicly available information* revealed a significant fragmentation of sources, together with a limited systematisation of SL experiences within institutional repositories. This dispersion hinders not only access to information, but also the possibility of assessing the actual impact of SL in terms of learning outcomes, service provision and social engagement. This situation aligns with the observations of Tapia and Peregalli (2020), who warn that a lack of institutional visibility constitutes one of the main obstacles to consolidating SL as a recognised methodology in higher education.

Regarding the *second objective, the classification of experiences* according to their nature, duration, target population and thematic focus made it possible to identify a concentration of SL initiatives in certain fields of knowledge, particularly in Social and Legal Sciences and Health Sciences. This predominance is consistent with previous studies highlighting a stronger affinity between SL and disciplines linked to social, educational and community-based intervention (Martínez-Odría et al., 2024; Rodríguez-Gallego, 2014). By contrast, the more limited presence of experiences in other fields suggests that SL has not yet been fully explored as a pedagogical strategy in areas where it could offer significant added value (such as engineering or experimental sciences) beyond isolated initiatives. An analysis of the nature of the experiences further reveals that a substantial proportion of SL activities take place outside the compulsory curriculum, through projects, workshops, seminars or training courses. While these formats foster flexibility and innovation, they also limit the capacity of SL to exert a structural influence on students' education. This concern was already highlighted by Martínez-Odría (2007), who argued for the need to integrate professional training and civic education at the core of university teaching. The limited presence of SL in compulsory course syllabi reinforces the notion of a still partial integration, largely dependent on individual academic motivation.

In relation to the *third objective, the analysis of the degree of institutionalisation* shows that, although there are vice-rectorates, offices and funding calls that promote SL experiences, no explicit and stable institutional policies have been identified that would consolidate SL as a strategic axis of university teaching. This situation is in line with García Romero and Lalueza (2019), who emphasise that effective institutionalisation of SL requires not only support structures, but also academic recognition, systematic staff training and ongoing evaluation mechanisms. Notably, the recent approval of the University of Seville's Statutes (2025) explicitly recognises the need to promote equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic and social development, fostering collaboration with local and regional administrations and social actors in order to respond to societal demands, including the promotion of Citizen Science and *Service-Learning* projects (TITLE II. University activity. Chapter III. Social engagement of the University. Article 83. Promotion of values and social and territorial cohesion, Section 3). The Statutes also acknowledge academic recognition for participation in mentoring activities, *Service-Learning*, Citizen Science, cultural, sporting, student representation, voluntary, solidarity-based, cooperation-oriented and social and entrepreneurial initiatives (TITLE III. The university community. Chapter III. Students. Article 121. Students' rights related to academic training, Section k).

The *fourth objective, focused on identifying gaps and imbalances*, confirms the existence of fields with low or no presence of SL, as well as a predominance of social and educational thematic approaches over other areas such as environmental or technological domains. This imbalance should not be interpreted as a lack of commitment, but rather as an absence of formalisation and of frameworks that facilitate the translation of socially oriented practices into explicit SL experiences, as noted by Castanheira Pais et al. (2022).

Beyond the descriptive and analytical aspects addressed in the previous objectives, the findings of this study enable a more forward-looking and propositional reflection aimed at improving and strengthening SL at the University of Seville, in line with the *fifth objective: to propose recommendations for enhancing the visibility, articulation and promotion of new SL experiences, as well as suggesting mechanisms for monitoring and regular evaluation*. The development of SL has been uneven and poorly articulated, limiting its capacity to become a transformative educational practice at an institutional scale. This situation echoes the observations of Aramburuzabala et al. (2019), who note that the expansion of SL without a clear institutional strategy tends to generate valuable but isolated experiences, with limited inter-faculty transfer and weak long-term sustainability. From this perspective, systematic visibility of experiences emerges as a necessary condition for advancing institutionalisation.

In this regard, the results highlight the need for stable institutional mechanisms capable of articulating SL beyond sporadic funding calls or individual academic commitment. As indicated by McIlrath et al. (2019) and Martínez-Odría et al. (2024), universities that have successfully consolidated SL typically have clear support structures, pedagogical guidance and academic recognition systems, which are elements that, in the case analysed, appear in a fragmented manner. The absence of shared monitoring and evaluation mechanisms further hampers the generation of evidence regarding the educational and social impact of SL, a key factor for its institutional legitimisation.

Furthermore, the study underscores that faculties without a prior tradition of SL do not necessarily lack socially oriented practices, but rather that these practices have not been translated into formalised Service-Learning experiences. This finding is consistent with Tapia and Peregalli (2020), who caution against equating the absence of SL with a lack of social commitment. In many cases, what is missing is not sensitivity, but pedagogical frameworks, methodological support and institutional recognition to facilitate the transformation of dispersed initiatives into genuine SL projects.

From this perspective, SL can be understood as a bridge between the university's third mission and teaching, capable of integrating academic learning, applied research and social engagement, provided that appropriate organisational conditions are in place to sustain it (Castanheira Pais et al., 2022). The literature consistently indicates that SL reaches its full potential when embedded within an institutional strategy that combines staff training, academic incentives, stable community partnerships and continuous evaluation systems (García Romero & Lalueza, 2019; Rego et al., 2020).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the theoretical framework and the results obtained in this study, it can be concluded that SL at the University of Seville is currently in a phase of uneven implementation and lacks common institutional mechanisms for its visibility and dissemination.

Given the well-documented potential of this methodology for the education of the university community and its strong social dimension, there is a clear need to strengthen its implementation and knowledge transfer within the institution. The experiences identified demonstrate that SL contributes to articulating rigorous academic learning with community service, fostering the development of students' professional, social and civic competences, as highlighted by numerous previous studies (Bermúdez Aguilar & González Sosa, 2022; Rego et al., 2020).

In line with the fifth objective of the study, i.e., to enhance the visibility, articulation and promotion of new SL experiences, the following recommendations are proposed:

- To create an institutional system for the registration and visibility of SL experiences that enables systematic monitoring, evaluation and dissemination, thereby reinforcing their academic and social recognition.
- To promote the integration of SL methodology into compulsory courses, ensuring that learning and service objectives are clearly defined and assessed, in accordance with the requirements of high-quality SL practice (Tapia et al., 2023).

The Faculty of Education Sciences has already initiated a trajectory in the field of SL training; therefore, it is recommended to further strengthen staff development in SL by promoting spaces for critical reflection and communities of practice that facilitate the transfer of experiences across faculties, in line with the proposals of García Romero and Lalueza (2019). Finally, the design of stable institutional evaluation mechanisms is suggested

in order to analyse the continuity, impact and contribution of SL to the university's third mission, understood as an active commitment to social and community development (Castanheira Pais et al., 2022).

In summary, this study provides an institutional diagnosis that highlights the actions undertaken, the progress achieved and the remaining challenges in consolidating Service-Learning at the University of Seville as a transformative pedagogical methodology, consistent with an integral and inclusive conception of higher education and with current societal demands.

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