



Social
Economy
4Ces

4. MAPPING OF EU PROJECTS PROMOTING SOCIAL ECONOMY AND OVERVIEW OF SERVICE LEARNING APPLICATION WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

STIMMULI FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



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Contents

Part 1: INTRODUCTION	4
<i>Few words about the Social Economy - HEIs nexus</i>	<i>4</i>
Part 2: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF IDENTIFIED EU PROJECTS	6
<i>CASE project</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Knowledge Alliance for Business Opportunity Recognition in SDGs.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Erasmus Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) project.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change (SE4LC).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>COOpilot project.....</i>	<i>9</i>
PART 3: APPLICATION OF SERVICE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION.....	10
<i>3.1 Definition of Service Learning.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>3.2 Overview of Service Learning application in Higher Education Institutes in Europe and beyond.....</i>	<i>10</i>
3.2.1. Integrating SL and ICT to support rural female entrepreneurship (University of Leon)	10
3.2.2. Sustainability Challenge	11
3.2.3. SL in Social & Public Policy (University of Glasgow).....	11
3.2.4. Europe Engage - Developing a Culture of Civic Engagement through SL within HE in Europe .	12
3.2.5. RURAL 3.0 - SL for the Rural Development	12
3.2.6. Community Engaged Learning	12
<i>3.3 Service Learning in Social economy Higher education institutions</i>	<i>13</i>
3.3.1 SL trajectory Master Sociology - Master Social Economics (University of Antwerp)	13
3.3.2 Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship program (SISE Minor, Tulane School of Architecture)	14
3.3.3 Learning by Doing: Consulting to Social Entrepreneurs (Rotterdam School of Management at the Erasmus University)	14
3.3.4 SEEP Master of Science (MSc) Program (Vienna University of Economics and Business).....	15
3.3.5 CASE Master program on Sustainability-driven Entrepreneurship (Joint Master).....	15
PART 4: CONCLUSIONS	16
REFERENCES	17

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Few words about the Social Economy – HEIs nexus

Today, the field of Social Economy (SE) plays a central role in the enhancement of economic and community development as well as in improving citizens' wellbeing across the European area and beyond. According to the European Parliament, SE constitutes one of the main pillars of the European social model, with “an essential role in the European economy, by combining profitability with solidarity, creating high-quality jobs, strengthening social, economic and regional cohesion, generating social capital, promoting active citizenship, and a type of economy with democratic values which puts people first, in addition to supporting sustainable development and social, environmental and technological innovation” (Social Economy Europe, 2018). Oriented towards the creation of a more cohesive society, the SE area is considered a communication bridge between the public and private sector, focusing simultaneously on both the societal and the economic aspects of a community. During the last decades, the SE has managed to create growth and employment in a period of economic stagnation and recession while generating engagement and returns in local communities. According to the European Commission communication “A strong social Europe for just transitions” (EC, 2020_a), the SE provides work for approximately 13.6 million people in Europe.

Triggered by the previous observations, the SE sector can provide future job opportunities to many young people, benefiting both in short and long term the inclusiveness of labor market. This can be achieved more easily if the new job seekers are equipped with transversal skills (EC, 2020_b) - such as teamwork, creative problem solving and critical thinking) - via the active role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which can contribute to training and education on SE staff skills. However, until now many existing SE university and especially master programmes usually focus either only on the social and solidarity aspect of the sector or on the commercial one. As such, the emerging needs of SE sector remain unmet, since there is not a comprehensive educational approach that can bring together the economic, commercial, and social and community aspects of SE. Therefore, SE education and labor market need to be linked productively to each other.

On another note, a considerable number of HEIs have begun to be interested in being connected in a more active and direct way with their socioeconomic context and the local community they are operating within. At the academic level, a range of entrepreneurial and social enterprise-centered curricula and cross-curricular programmes have developed in various forms in HEIs across the globe, although not always securing long-term perspectives in the cooperation between HEIs and community actors. Moreover, current teaching methods rarely promote the incorporation of real-world learning experiences in the academic curriculum, connecting students with their communities.

Despite the last described reality, it is true that HEIs can be considered a stable ally for supporting all these opportunities that have come about through the operation of SE. This can be confirmed especially in terms of employment and building a set of new competences addressed to young people, as future employees or even employers in the today's labour market. The role of universities is to be directly connected to society and they are always needed to respond to various societal needs. In addition to this, it is evident that universities are a key actor for supporting economic development and the well-being of citizens. That is why it is necessary from the side of higher education to spread its benefits across society so as not to be limited to students and graduates (Farnell, 2020). At the same time, according to recent labour market trends (EC, 2020_b), there is an increasing need for transversal skills such as teamwork, creative problem solving and critical thinking. Therefore, it seems to be more than necessary to consider seriously students' learning needs and to focus on alternative and cooperative educational programmes, building on their transversal skills and offering more real-world experiences, as it has already highlighted in EU

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Agenda for HE (European Commission, 2017). Today, HEIs are called to respond to such gaps via innovative, cooperative and more community-centred educational approaches for enhancing students' future employability and being better interconnected with the labour market and the local societies.

Generally, there have been some valuable efforts until now by a number of EU projects for the promotion and embedding of SE into educational systems and especially into HE. In most of these projects, many universities have participated and assumed a central role in the purpose of boosting the collaboration between universities and SE organizations as well as of promoting the integration of significant societal issues into academic curriculum in various levels, with the guidance and contribution of local actors.

As a response to all the above identified needs, the [SE4Ces project](#) introduces an active and collective learning approach as well as novel collaboration pathways to connect HEIs with SE organisations and their communities. First, a matchmaking tool will be created on the SE4Ces “Wiki platform” and website, facilitating in this way the matching of demand and supply in SE skills. In addition, SE4Ces will leverage the educational tool of Service Learning (SL) in selected SE organizations through short term placements that will be facilitated by the SE4Ces matchmaking tool. In parallel, HEIs and SE organisations will be trained on how to adapt the SL methodology and integrate it in their usual operational practices with the aim to enable enhanced collaboration between teachers, SE trainers and students on the ‘academic’ side and SE organisations on the ‘practical’ side, thus combining theory with practice and hands-on experiences. Moreover, through the establishment of SE Living Labs and the integration of community-centered and collaborative teaching and learning approaches (SL, co-teaching, co-creation of knowledge), HEIs in the field of SE will integrate real life societal issues into curricula and highly contribute towards community development, tackling skills mismatches and fostering students' transversal skills (creative problem solving, critical thinking etc).

Regarding next sections and aims of this document, a first overarching aim is to present a mapping and reviewing process of relevant EU projects which include partnerships among universities, local actors, and SE organisations/enterprises. In more detail, the mapping of identifying EU projects is part of D.3.1 (State of the art in SE education and training) - included in Work Package 3. The process of this mapping is based on the following set of specific criteria that have been used to identify several projects that will be presented in the next section:

- They promote the collaboration of HEIs with SE organisations and/or local community actors;
- They support the active participation of SE organisations in teaching and in co-creating academic knowledge to offer a pragmatic aspect by actors that implement SE approaches and to elaborate innovative pedagogical approaches (e.g., SL);
- They have SE as its core, even if their purpose slightly expands to fields that are related to SE principles (such as the concept of sustainable development and community development);
- They are addressed to HEI students, teachers as also to many individuals interested in SE and SE organisations, promoting SE principles and community growth.

Another essential objective of this document is to give emphasis on the meaning of the concept of SL - explained briefly - as another integral examined part of D.3.1. Also, an analysis on the application of SL in HE is presented, with some indicative examples proving its usefulness through various academic master programmes. Afterwards, there is an overview of some SL practices that are applied to the field of SE programmes across Europe and beyond.

PART 2: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF IDENTIFIED EU PROJECTS

In this section, a series of considerable EU projects, either past or present, are presented, the findings of which derive from extensive desk research. The process of exploring and identifying EU projects is considered a reference point about the existing educational approaches and initiatives adopted through interesting partnerships between HEIs and community actors, related to SE fields.

CASE project

The CASE project (“Competencies for a sustainable socio-economic development”) is an EU-funded project which lasted for two years, from 2015 to 2017, within the framework of the Programme “Erasmus Plus - Knowledge Alliances”. This project consisted of a consortium of 10 Partners from 5 European countries under the coordination of the RCE Vienna, located at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. CASE project was addressed to three different, but connected to each other, target groups: European universities, European Companies and European master students of all disciplines. The focus of these target groups has given many opportunities to all of them for sharing common goals and working together towards mutually beneficial results and outcomes to the society and the economy of all regions involved. CASE has promoted in European HEIs new inter- and transdisciplinary ways of teaching and learning as well as sustainable entrepreneurial education, increasing university-business cooperation, new university spin-offs and start-ups in the area of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Some of the most important elements that this project promoted are presented as follows:

- Knowledge Platform: The CASE Knowledge Platform supports university teachers and business partners to acquire competencies for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. The Platform has been designed to translate major outcomes of the project into practical, user-friendly information and animated short videos. It also provides inspiring good practices and tools for collaboration between universities and partners from business and civil society sector.
- Sustainability Competencies Tool: a tool to make individual competencies for sustainable development visible and to give support to further development. It can be used as support for self-evaluation as well as for feedback processes in peer-groups, with coaches or teachers. Above all, the tool is used by students in the context of sustainability-oriented teaching events, but it can also be transferred to sustainability-oriented companies and non-profit organizations in a modified form.
- Practical Cooperation Guide: Nine innovative cooperation formats based on twenty-one university courses tested and evaluated within CASE address topics and methods important to foster competencies for sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. This cooperation guide features these nine cooperation formats and highlights concrete benefits, success factors and challenges for users. Also, tested pilot examples and further supporting material can be accessed and downloaded for free.
- Supportive Material and Tools: CASE project has developed this tool and other material to support the implementation of straightforward university-business cooperation. They all promote continuous self-reflection about project experiences and foster the dialogue and feedback processes.

- Joint Master Programme: The CASE knowledge alliance developed the framework and basic elements of a new Joint Master Program on “Sustainability-Driven Entrepreneurship” for European universities. The framework is based on six thematic blocks and sixteen related modules. The structure of every single module is aiming at the enhancement of skills and competencies entrepreneurial education and founding new sustainability-driven enterprises via using inter- and transdisciplinary methods and tools in teaching and learning. Also, in the first semester of this master, and specifically in the module named “1.1 Transformation and Sustainability”, a well-designed seminar is offered to students, including elements of experiential education (CASE, 2018).

Knowledge Alliance for Business Opportunity Recognition in SDGs

The “Knowledge Alliance for Business Opportunity Recognition in SDGs” is a new Knowledge Alliance Erasmus project which began in January 2021, bridging together 9 partners from a variety of European countries and with the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, from Finland as the leading partner. This project focuses on the promotion of exchange and co-creation of knowledge as a new form of cooperation between HEIs and businesses regarding the creation of an innovative and scalable curriculum and training material on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), not just only from the side of building awareness in the students and academic staff, but also focusing on business opportunity recognition and economic development related to SDGs. Regarding the innovative elements that will be produced during the lifespan of this project, a curriculum and training material on recognizing and realizing the business opportunities in SDGs will be created, tested and disseminated - through the valuable contribution and support from universities - which will take the form of training courses for SMEs on the SDGs, promoting the meaning sustainable socioeconomic growth within the academic staff and relevant stakeholders, including students who represent the necessary future human capital that will assume the role of putting their knowledge and skills into practice. The training courses address 60 most relevant business opportunities linked to SDGs with 5 Modules: shared value business opportunity recognition & specific opportunities in food and agriculture, in cities, in energy and materials and in health and wellbeing.

Erasmus Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) project

The project “Social and Solidarity Economy” (SSE) was a European project (from 2012 to 2015), funded by the Erasmus Mundus programme of the European Union, gaining an international recognition. It consisted by a consortium of 5 partners (with lead partner the York St John University) from 5 different countries from all over the world (UK, Bolivia, Spain, Peru, Portugal). In parallel, except for the members of the consortium that were mainly universities, the project was supported also by a variety of associate partners that contributed actively to the activities of the project. More specifically, the primary focus was to develop an interactive network where academics and practitioners from diverse cultural and interdisciplinary backgrounds question the role of universities in enhancing studies and practices of the social/solidarity economy in higher education, whereas the second thematic content focused on how the academic research and studying on this emerging field can advance the academic curricula, creating more innovative and practical teaching approaches.

Regarding the main project’s outputs, a specific handbook with eight separate chapters has been created through the project and particularly two out of those eight chapters were mentioned to the core principles of SE, such as the meaning and importance of the social capital (and its impact on employment, social and environmental policies) as well as the meaning of the education and training of staff and students from the universities within the area of social and solidarity economy and

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towards social entrepreneurship, operating as a capacity-building guide for students as future employees and serving also as a practical tool for various socioeconomic and educational settings, since the project included universities and researchers from different continents.

Moreover, this project performed a series of dissemination activities and the main materials that were used were conference papers, workshops, and round table discussions. Finally, a worth mentioning activity that was considered very important for the added value and impact of the project was an International Bilingual Conference (in English and Spanish), which took place in 2015 and its main thematic discussion was about how HEIs can foster interactions between several current economic systems (public, private, and social) to promote social entrepreneurship cultures for sustainable development in various communities. This conference attracted a high number of participants from almost all continents, discussing and exchanging opinions about the educational role of social and solidarity economy as also regarding existing local development practices in this domain (York University, n.d.).

Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change (SE4LC)

The strategic partnership “Social Entrepreneurship for Local Change” (SE4LC) was a (partially funded) Erasmus+ project, which run from 2015 to 2017. The objective of this strategic partnership was to advance and create a study module on social entrepreneurship with a scope of up to 15 ECTS. In particular, the project brought together an alliance of partners that represented HEI and social enterprises, thus connecting the two worlds.

Under the project, a variety of target groups were targeted by the project through the development of the course, whereas the format of delivery has been flexible (comprising both online and blended learning modes). The project aimed to address to an interdisciplinary target group of educators, students, and young professionals in various fields: economics, business administration, geography, agriculture, regional development, urban/ landscape planning. Essentially, the project sought to adapt and complement existing learning resources, both national and European, and to offer a set of new materials that derived from the partners' local contexts. Regarding the overall learning approach, as well as the materials provided as a result of the project's pilot activities, the project delivered the following:

- 2 development of online course materials on social entrepreneurship theory, methods, tools, and case studies as open educational resources;
- 3 implementation of blended learning activities on the subject of social entrepreneurship in combination with local workshops organised alternately by three of the consortium partners (combination of theory and practice);
- 4 preparation of a guidance report for teachers interested in integrating social entrepreneurship into their courses (for further exploitation, replicability and sustainability of the project's legacy).

Methodologically speaking, the project adopted a methodical approach of a pedagogical action research cycle: the pilot course was repeated three times and then accompanied by profound observation and evaluation and continuous improvement, eventually leading to the creation of a sustainable teaching model on social entrepreneurship. The knowledge that was accumulated through the project fed into the guidance report for teachers. As an outcome, the project offered added value in the following: contribution to the increase of social entrepreneurship business start-ups resulting from students attendance in the course; promotion of the internet-based course delivery and assistance to cross-institutional cooperation based on the teaching training in this field; facilitation of student and staff mobility, as well as of interdisciplinary cooperation within and between

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the institutions involved; and finally awareness raising for both university personnel and general public (SE4LC, 2017; DAAD, 2016).

COOpilot project

COOpilot was a 1-year (2017-2018) project that was co-financed by DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission. The core objective of the project was to offer novel solutions for youth employment across the countries of the European Union. To address existing challenges, the project aimed to leverage cooperative entrepreneurship. More specifically, COOpilot sought to transfer competencies from the more advanced countries in the field of cooperatives (Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain) towards the less advanced ones (Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Cyprus).

The project was carried out by a strategic partnership of three academic institutions (i.e. National School of Political Studies and Public Administration in Romania, Université de Liège in Belgium, and Scuola Nazionale Servizi Foundation in Italy), four SE actors (Social Economy Institute in Greece, Fundacion Escuela Andaluza de Economia Social in Spain, Authority for Cooperative Societies in Cyprus, Mladinska Zadruga Kreaktor, Socialno Podjetje in Slovenia), two European networks (Federazione Trentina della Cooperazione in Italy, Association des Agences de la Democratie in France) and two public bodies (Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa Sdruzenie in Bulgaria, Pour la Solidarité sbl in Belgium).

During its lifetime, COOpilot pursued some specific objectives to connect the principles of SE with HEIs. First of all, the project performed an in-depth research and assessment of the ecosystem for cooperatives and entrepreneurship in the pilot countries. Moreover, the project elaborated a series of national reports on the development potential and programmes and cooperative entrepreneurship practices. Apart from the theoretical work, the project had a strong practical component: it performed 5 training sessions in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Slovenia, offered training for young people from professional education, business education and technical education, and finally developed a European recommendation guide to improve cooperative entrepreneurship. Under the project, academic and cooperative partners came together to create and/or adapt courses and methods to offer appropriate solutions to the targeted countries. The novelty of the project can be found in its overarching aim of gathering academic partners, training institutes, stakeholders of SE, and public authorities for jointly promoting SE principles and cooperative entrepreneurship in European educational institutes (COOpilot, 2017).

PART 3: APPLICATION OF SERVICE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1 Definition of Service Learning

SL is considered as a pedagogical tool through which students are provided with opportunities to learn and develop both in the classroom and in their wider community. Also, it offers them significant chances to directly interconnect with local organisations, generating positive impact in the society as well as broadening substantially their learning experience and spectrum (Levesque-Bristol et al., 2011). Generally, SL is based on experiential education, that is on the attitude of “learning by doing”. However, it should be stressed that SL differs from the purely experiential learning in two substantial ways: (1) Its purpose is to orient the learners towards practical environments where the primary motivation is service, and (2) learning takes place in two ways: firstly, as students take part in the experience and secondly, as they reflect upon what happened during the experience and what they gained. Also, it involves a more directly democratic dimension, as it requires students to work together with their teachers in designing educational strategies for the students' own learning. Unlike other forms of educational activities which occur during school and university hours or as extracurricular actions in the same way as SL does, the difference is that the examined process includes reflection time as a constituent part of its success. The rationale for SL is that “students learn best by doing, by serving, and by reflecting on the experience” (Witmer & Anderson, 1994).

3.2 Overview of Service Learning application in Higher Education Institutes in Europe and beyond

Over the past few decades, the practice of SL has been growing significantly at the university level. As an educational approach, it began first in the United States and Argentina and, since then, different initiatives appear occasionally, nearly simultaneously, in multiple countries around the world (Escofet and Rubio, 2019:159). Also, various European attempts have followed but they generally lag in terms of more systematic actions to include SL. In addition to enhancing academic and real-world learning, the overall goal is oriented to instill in students a sense of civic engagement and responsibility (European Observatory of SL in HE, 2021_a).

Undoubtedly, although there have been valuable efforts to incorporate the idea of SL into the academic mainstream, its actual institutional framework seems to be yet uncertain. SL is characterized more as a extra-curricular practice, promoted financially through “soft” short-term grants, and perceived by educators as “just” a theoretical (and time-consuming) pedagogy that can be harmful to the effectiveness of traditional tenure and promotion committees. It is in this context that SL defenders have begun to dedicate intensive efforts to institutionalize it within HE and ensure as much as possible its institutional life span (Buttin, 2006:474).

In the following sub-sections, an indicative list of identified educational programmes and practices on how SL is practically applied in different programmes and courses in European HEIs as well as in relevant projects is provided.

3.2.1. Integrating SL and ICT to support rural female entrepreneurship (University of Leon)

This Academic Degree is addressed to both Bachelor and Master students (mixed participation), offered by the University of Leon, in Spain. The programme aims to assess and evaluate the educational impact of SL on multidisciplinary groups of university students of different subjects of Graduate and Postgraduate courses. The aim of the programme is to facilitate University-Society collaboration and leverage the knowledge acquired in class to advise a group of rural female

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entrepreneurs, using ICT. To achieve this aim, a qualitative study is initially carried out, based on the analysis of the students' responses to a self-assessment questionnaire. Afterwards, an experimental design is carried out in two paired groups, and finally the possible effects of SL on academic performance are analyzed in depth.

The related disciplines of the programme are Business and Engineering and Technology. The maximum number of admissible students are 50, whereas the programme is applied on the fields of sustainable cities and communities, gender equality, and quality education (European Observatory of SL in HE, 2021_b).

3.2.2. Sustainability Challenge

"Sustainability Challenge" is an interdisciplinary University course on Sustainable Development, essentially offered by four different universities of Vienna (Austria): Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), University of Vienna, Vienna Technical University (TU) and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU). The aim of the course is to educate students through an innovative learning experience. The course is linked to sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The course was officially launched in 2010, on a yearly basis, and is managed by Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development Vienna, and works in coordination with external partners (e.g., companies, ministries, NGOs). Currently, the Austrian Development Agency provides the largest part of funding. Annually, the course admits between 60 and 80 students, from master, Ph.D., and advanced bachelor level from all fields. The students are selected through a detailed application process. The course offers two participation tracks: SL and start-up. In the SL track, interdisciplinary student teams work together with a partner (e.g. companies, ministries, NGOs) on an SDG-related project defined by the partners. As such, the course adopts an applied methodology that permits the combination of academic studies with practical experience (RCE, 2021).

3.2.3. SL in Social & Public Policy (University of Glasgow)

The University of Glasgow (Scotland, UK) offers the MA(SocSci)/LLB/MA "Social & Public Policy". The programme lasts for 4 years. Under this programme, students can participate in a SL process, which is integrated in the general structure. SL combines academic coursework with voluntary work in the community, to help enrolled students to experience policy in practice. It is basically a part of the Social and Public Policy Honours curriculum, and as such it is an accredited course for both enrolled and visiting students.

More specifically, for the category of visiting students, SL is an academic course in the first Semester, namely "Service in the Community" (equivalent to 20 credits). The students undertake an 8-week engagement through voluntary work in the community for 6 hours per week. However, students are expected to find their own voluntary work, and as the assessment of the students is done through reflective journal. For social and public policy honours students (students who have gained a high academic distinction), there are two academic courses through which SL is practiced: Education for Citizenship (semester 1, 20 credits) and Active Citizenship (semester 2, 40 credits). Again, students are expected to undertake an 8-week engagement in voluntary work in the community for 6 hours per week. Their final assessment is done through various ways: essay, exam, peer review, co-assessed active participation, reflective journal¹, critical incident report, co-assessed oral presentation (University of Glasgow, 2021).

¹ The term "reflective journal" is described as follows: "A reflective journal is an account of your work in progress, but more essentially an opportunity for reflection on the learning experience. It should provide you with a means of

3.2.4. Europe Engage – Developing a Culture of Civic Engagement through SL within HE in Europe

Europe Engage is an EU-funded Erasmus+ project that connects 12 universities from 12 EU countries. The project was actively implemented from 2014 to 2017 with the goal to enhance and promote SL activities within European Universities. The project developed a SL network in Europe and promoted it as a pedagogical approach, while it was identified that in terms of civic engagement and SL in HE, more needs to be achieved. Among the various project's results, the most indicative ones were the design use of virtual platforms for SL projects, a series of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for training to implement SL activities, and some guidelines and recommendations for the institutionalization of SL in HE.

In more detail, the project has yielded the following results regarding SL activities: under the Mapping and Evaluating of SL as a pedagogical approach in the universities and partner countries of the project, two online survey tools, a Europe Engage Allocation Report, and a definition of SL in Europe were produced. Moreover, a Repository of SL experiences in Europe was developed, alongside a definition of quality standards for European SL experiences. Finally, an online database of SL trainers in the participating countries was created, including a list of trainers, publications, doctoral theses, and other SL resources (EC, 2021).

3.2.5. RURAL 3.0 – SL for the Rural Development

RURAL 3.0 - SL for the Rural Development is an EU-funded Erasmus+ project that connects eight EU countries. The project started in 2019 and will be completed in 2021. It aims to help grow the fundamental skills and entrepreneurship capabilities of the rural population, to enhance the quality of education for sustainable growth and foster university-community collaborations in rural areas through a creative and revolutionary SL approach, and finally to increase the importance of universities as their students seek to provide a service that is in line with the demands of enterprises and social needs in rural areas.

Rural 3.0 is set as a knowledge alliance project between different European Universities and rural partners, each with a different history, different experiences with rural social entrepreneurship and/or rural SL, different educational systems and community needs which are unique regarding the location, politics, and economics of different rural communities. The project develops a common framework and online space at the European level to stimulate rural social entrepreneurship, to promote the development of the core skills of rural residents, and to make university students responsive to the needs of rural areas while working with rural communities to develop sustainable economic, social, and environmental solutions (RURAL 3.0, 2017).

3.2.6. Community Engaged Learning

COMMUNITY ENGAGED LEARNING (CEL) is an online course, offered by CAMPUS ENGAGE, a network of Irish universities for the promotion of civic engagement activities in Irish HE that is open to all HEIs staff, students, community organisations and local companies in Ireland. Particularly, one of the main activities of this network, supported by all 7 Irish Universities and the Technological University of Dublin, is to embed and promote accredited student community-based learning and teaching (CBLT) on campuses across Ireland. Such interactive approaches have proven to enhance student learning outcomes, while they are working in partnership with civic and civil society

engaging critically and analytically with module content". Warwick. (2015). Retrieved from:

https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/study/ugmodules/humananimalstudies/assessment/reflectivejournal/

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organisations (CSOs) and in general with local actors, to act and be linked more dynamically with local and global societal challenges.

Regarding this course, it is about an introductory programme for teaching staff in HE, which explores the basic concepts and practical steps on how to integrate CEL into any teaching curriculum. The course is built around a series of video tutorials, individual and group activities, a selection of academic and grey reading material, and online case studies with community partners, students, and academics. In addition, the course covers a duration of 25-hours learner effort and is undertaken over a 6-week period, after which learners can claim their digital badge in CEL from the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning (NFETL) in HE.

In fact, through this course students are given the advantage to gain academic credit for engaging and reflecting on a learning experience or piece of research in partnership with a community organisation. This allows students to explore 'real life' problem solving, their future role as a professional, and how they can contribute to address Irish, EU and international societal challenges with the help of a SL experience. Indicative examples come from various disciplines, such as law students providing legal advice to the public in their local community law centres; engineering students working with older people to design innovative occupation support tools; or dietetics students giving nutrition workshops with local school students (Campus Engage, 2021).

3.3 Service Learning in Social economy Higher education institutions

Regarding the area of SE, the technique of SL is recognized as an effective teaching methodology, as it incorporates a practical aspect in the learning experience, a reflective approach, a community-based service as well as a beneficial experience both for the student and the participating enterprise/SE organization. In parallel, it is considered to contribute positively to the development and upscaling of students' skills and to the adoption of social entrepreneurial behaviors (Calvert, 2011). According to Mueller et. al (2015), "SL is suggested as one of the most suitable learning methods for social entrepreneurship education. By gaining real-life experience with a social venture as part of a SL project, students get to know the advantages and disadvantages of social entrepreneurship while generating social value in their community". On the other hand, although SL and SE as initiatives generally co-exist on college and university campuses, sharing a common goal of engaging students in work to achieve the public good and focusing on the connection of students' education with the management of social problems and needs, there is little or no insufficient collaboration or a communication between the two approaches (Jones et al., 2010).

In the next sub-sections, an overview of best practices in SL application in SE HE disciplines as well as a list of related master programmes in Europe and beyond are thoroughly described. In essence, they represent some valuable attempts of connecting SE in HE disciplines with the SL approach. In parallel, they underline the importance of combining these two concepts so as to ultimately build a common ground in the cognitive, transversal, and civic engagement competences of students and to enhance more effectively the operation of real-world learning experiences on community issues.

3.3.1 SL trajectory Master Sociology – Master Social Economics (University of Antwerp)

The first example of connecting SL with a Master's degree in the field of SE comes from the University of Antwerp (Belgium). In more detail, through the programme "Master in Social Economics" which brings together the disciplines of Sociology, Economics and Business, the university offered during the academic year 2019-2020 a unique experience to 42 master students to work alongside the employees of six social enterprises in the city of Antwerp. This venture

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included a SL approach, as the goal was to encourage social inclusion and social well-being via active employment. The students in this master programme were offered the opportunity to work more than 40 hours next to the workers of specific social organizations/companies, such as Flexpack, Steunpunt tewerkstelling, Levanto, Met Sense and Wotepa. The central question of such an initiative was whether the problem of the exclusion of significant groups can be solved from the regular labor market through entrepreneurship actions in SE field. Via the actual experience of working alongside socially vulnerable actors and via a critical (personal and academic) reflection strategy, various group conversations, personal diaries and debates between organisation-student and docent, while the students also reflected on the existing structures regarding subsidies, target group policy, regulation as well as the (personal) value of work for people with a social vulnerability status (European Observatory of SL in HE, 2021_c).

3.3.2 Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship program (SISE Minor, Tulane School of Architecture)

The “Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship” (SISE) regards an interdisciplinary minor (Minor degree refers to “*a supplemental second discipline of study and concentration that often complements the major*”, (TOP HAT, 2021). for undergraduate students from across the campus, offered from the Tulane School of Architecture (USA). Building on the added value that can be derived from innovative approaches on SL and civic engagement, this minor provides students with skills to create a more just society. At the same time, SISE Minor introduces to all interested and participating students the concept of social innovation, the mindset of human-centered design, and frameworks for social impact leadership. Also, there is a chance for students to develop an understanding of complex problems while developing a toolkit to create positive social and environmental change. This specific module of six courses provides a total of 17 credit hours. The first course (SISE 2010) which is an introduction to Social Innovation and SE is a pre-requisite for all other classes and includes a mandatory 20-hour SL part² (Tulane School of Architecture, 2021).

3.3.3 Learning by Doing: Consulting to Social Entrepreneurs (Rotterdam School of Management at the Erasmus University)

The course “Learning by Doing: Consulting to SE” consists an integral part of the “International Business Administration” study programme, from the Rotterdam School of Management at the Erasmus University (Rotterdam, Netherlands). More particularly, it deals with drawing connections between literature and practice, based on the philosophy of experiential or SL. Experiential learning (EL) is a “credit-bearing” educational experience in which students in this course consult to social entrepreneurs in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, while they are reflecting on the service activity in such a way that they can gain further understanding of the course’s content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and of course an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. The possibility of working with real, existing organizations, gives students the opportunity to apply the knowledge that they have gained until that point to a real-life situation. In addition, the work of each student is addressed to benefit both their client organization and the broader community. All the interesting empirical cases included in the SL experience of students are pre-selected by instructors, but there is also flexibility for suggestions or adjustments from students about the field on which they are going to work.

Finally, concerning the promising learning outcomes, in this minor, students are given the chance to design and execute a consulting project with an organization to resolve one or more concrete

² In the following link, the curriculum of SISE Minor is presented, with all courses available:

<https://tulane.app.box.com/s/109r8f1k5ywb4h6wac9c3ikx3qer5fv2>

6211511-EPP-1-2020-1-ELEPPKA2-KA

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problems. This project will provide insights on various issues relating to management, including entrepreneurship, the non-profit sector and interaction between market, governments and civil society as also some trends within the community. Apart from the whole experience they will gain, students will also develop their consultancy and communication skills while having the experience of working in a real organization as part of a team of consultants, applying as many theoretical concepts as possible they learn from the university in real-life context. Also, they will actively contribute to their client organization (and thus to the wider community) in the form of doing actual research and making valuable recommendations during the penultimate phase of the course (Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2021).

3.3.4 SEEP Master of Science (MSc) Program (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

This is a one year-long course forming part of the Master Program in “Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy (SEEP)” coordinated by the Institute for Ecological Economics at Vienna University of Economics and Business. A core element of the course is that students are encouraged to bring their own SL project to life in the Austrian context. Particularly, the SL projects are conducted with either an established partner organization or company, a start-up company or an association located in Vienna or greater Austria. It should be clarified that this innovative course is included in the second year of this master, both in the 3rd and 4th semester, titled as “SL I” and “SL II” respectively. Furthermore, both courses offer students the opportunity to understand different perspectives of sustainability via an experience based on the SL method. At the same time, through this specialised course this technique fosters the autonomous operation of students to address a problem or need in society, while students are invited to design a particular solution concept for urban challenges in the local area. The coaching process of the course includes four phases: Preparation, Action, Reflection and Evaluation and will be backed up via the lecturers’ counselling . The already developed structure of the course contributes amongst others to the enhancement of students’ problem-solving skills, of the conflict resolution skills, of networking and teamwork spirit and of the organization skills (Vienna University, 2021).

3.3.5 CASE Master program on Sustainability-driven Entrepreneurship (Joint Master)

It is about a Joint Master Programme for “Sustainability-driven Entrepreneurship” for European universities, which was created under the EU funded project “CASE: Competencies for a sustainable socio-economic development” in the action of Knowledge Alliances. The development of this master is linked to the general goal of the project to initiate new ways of teaching and learning methods as well as a strong cooperation between HE and business for the enhancement of a socioeconomic development in a sustainable way and of new forms of sustainability-driven enterprises. The master program is explicitly competence oriented. Thus, a series of innovative teaching and learning methods are adopted, fostering the sustainability and entrepreneurial competencies, such as anticipatory thinking, creativity, opportunity-detection, strategic action competence and interpersonal, communication skills. By acting as entrepreneurs, students learn to address complex real-world sustainability problems within a business setting. Moreover, there is a need to have learning settings where students stay in contact with the world outside university and this is supported via the SL projects with business partners or NGOs. That is one example on how students can learn in a self-directed manner, in an inter- and transdisciplinary setting and through exchange with peers, mentors and role models. Also, it is necessary to underline that in the first semester of this master, and specifically in the module named “1.1 Transformation and Sustainability”, a well-designed seminar is offered to students, incorporating the following activities: 1-week-excursion for intensive group experience; activities for group dynamics and teambuilding from experiential education; team work on sustainability challenge; excursions to or guests from regional

sustainability-driven enterprises and startups. Since the teaching method of this course is based on experiential learning, collaborative learning and project-based learning, the suggested assessment for the students is to focus on writing an essay/ learning report, combined with a reflection process after the experience they gained in the previous experiential actions (Biberhofer & Bockwoldt, 2016: 69).

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS

It has become increasingly recognized that actors of SE have a balanced role over current social, economic, and environmental challenges, especially today with Covid-19 crisis. It is high time that these actors assumed a more leading role in the post-COVID phase to inspire transformation towards a more inclusive and sustainable economy and society, given their mission of serving the common good, protecting the general interest and addressing the needs of the entire community (OECD, 2020). In light of this acknowledgement, the contribution of HEIs to support both jobs creation and sustainable growth can be strategically promoted through stronger links with SE stakeholders and the wider community. Indeed, new types of co-operation between education institutions, entrepreneurs and community stakeholders come about during the recent years, although they are rarely sustained. However, HEIs do not show an adequate willingness to integrate more systematically various innovative practices into their teaching methods, thus avoiding connecting students with their communities and real-world learning experiences (Calvo, 2016).

The mapping carried out in this document validates this reality. From the one hand, there have been EU-funded projects and programmes that tried to close the loopholes among SE actors and HEIs, resulting in successful case-studies during the last ten years. On the other hand, the mapping proves that these initiatives are of relatively narrow scope and their total number remain still low. The SE4Ces project attempts to offer a way forward and reinvigorate the theoretical and practical efforts to drastically address these gaps and study the latest innovation trends in education, through a holistic approach. As such, the project aspires to contribute to the wider legacy of all the previously analysed efforts, while also paving the way for future endeavors in the field.

With regard to the SL application in HE and especially in SE HEIs, it can be concluded that it is not yet widely common in SE and HEIs, despite some important but scattered efforts in which SL is adopted as an innovative teaching method. There are sporadic attempts to that end, but there is space for further its replicability and uptake across Europe.

Although there have been studies focusing on the application of SL on various disciplines, such as Administration, Accounting, Finance, Marketing and Operations Management, most of them seem to not offer an empirical analysis of their impact on university students or their direct interaction with the local community. Even though SL is considered a suitable pedagogical tool both for the upscaling of teaching process and for the creation of key entrepreneurial competencies that all students, engaged in SL courses, should develop, very few studies have nevertheless presented and proven tangible effects about the practice or long-terms effects on students and their connection with the community stakeholders (Martínez-Campillo et. al, 2019).

Finally, it is apparent that in the European world, the development of master courses that are specialised on SE disciplines and SL remains in an infant level (Rural project, n.d). Still, the potentials of SL integration into SE HE fields look very promising, and this is one of the primary objectives of the SE4CEs project, which leverages the usefulness of SL for the provision of an innovative and holistic approach into tertiary education.

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