



#InclusionMatters

NEWS AND UPDATES

FROM THE FRONTLINE OF CHANGE

GLOCAL FACTORY NEWSLETTER

1/2025 – MARCH

LEARNING THROUGH ACTION FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE FUTURE

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NEWS and EVENTS

Dear Reader,

we are pleased to dedicate the first issue of the 2025 GF newsletter to the relationship between migrant integration and civil society.

We will explore the methodology of **service-learning (SL)**, an educational approach that combines academic instruction with community engagement, fostering both learning and social responsibility.

We will showcase how service-learning has been implemented at the university level through the SL(M) project, an initiative funded by the **Erasmus+** program and carried out in collaboration with five partners across three countries: the **University of Santiago de Compostela** and **Accem** in Spain, the **University of Verona** and **Glocal Factory** in Italy, and the **University of Galway** in Ireland.

The issue opens with an interview to the project coordinators from the University of Santiago de Compostela. We then delve into key thematic areas, supported by reference to reports and videos that highlight the project activities and results.

Our goal is to **broaden the reach** of this initiative, fostering greater **awareness** and **adoption** of service-learning. In Italy, this methodology is not yet widely implemented and, as you will see, its undeniable benefits make a strong case for its broader integration into **educational practices**.

Thank you for your attention!



SERVICE-LEARNING (SL)

A methodology towards inclusion and empowerment

Interview to professors **Miguel A. Santos Rego** and **Mar Lorenzo Moledo** from the University of Santiago de Compostela, leading partner of the SL(M) project.



What distinguishes Service-Learning from traditional volunteering, and how does it enhance educational experience for students?

First, unlike volunteering, SL is an **educational methodology** that is part of an experience-based pedagogy program and is directly connected to the **school curriculum**. It aims to achieve two main objectives: to **stimulate learning** and to **provide a service** to the community. On the other hand, and this is what makes the difference, in volunteering, the important thing is to provide a service to the community. In this way, SL is characterized by the leading role of students, attention to a real need in the community, connection with curricular objectives, execution of the service project, and reflection.

The benefits for students are both **cognitive** (deeper learning) and **socio-emotional**, as it promotes students' civic and social capital. Our research has demonstrated the relationship of this methodology with certain competencies: entrepreneurship, interpersonal, intercultural, networking, and analysis and synthesis.

Thanks to this methodology, students put their knowledge and skills at the service of the **common good** in a practical, **experiential way**, contributing to the improvement of their environment while acquiring new knowledge, practicing skills, and strengthening attitudes and values.

How can organizations within the third sector effectively collaborate with academic institutions to implement Service-Learning initiatives?

Social entities can offer great opportunities for the development of high-quality Service-Learning projects. They are familiar with the **needs** of the community and can be involved not only in the design of the projects but also in their implementation and evaluation. In any case, the relationship established between these entities and the university must be based on the **principle of reciprocity**. These organizations are essential for the university to fulfill its **third mission**. Undoubtedly, Service-Learning is an excellent way to enhance the visibility and impact of social organizations.

What challenges have you encountered in integrating Service-Learning methodologies, particularly in projects aimed at supporting migrants and refugees?

The first challenge is the **lack of experience** and well-developed programs in many institutions to address the needs of these individuals. Secondly, there is a **lack of awareness** within the university community about the realities that migrants and refugees face in each context. The third challenge arises from **bureaucratic obstacles**, which sometimes delay or even prevent the implementation of certain projects. Lastly, the **sustainability** of projects is affected by the academic calendar and the continuous turnover of faculty members in different subjects and areas of work.

Could you share some success stories or impactful outcomes from the SL(M) Project that highlight the value of Service-Learning in the third sector?

The Service-Learning projects developed have involved students and professors from all fields of knowledge, ranging from Law to Health Sciences, including Education, Journalism, and Geography. They have also enabled the participation of numerous social organizations, which have collaborated with students and professors to ensure the success of the projects and to address the needs of the people involved. This collaboration has facilitated the incorporation of migration-related content into academic programs.

In this regard, selecting specific experiences is not an easy task. Nevertheless, we believe the following three projects at USC serve as good examples of SL(M) success: a) the work of the Faculty of Optics and Optometry in the **DSL-MIGRANT Project**, aimed at detecting visual and auditory impairments in preschool children that could affect their educational and social development, b) the **Peinas Project**, led by the Faculty of Education Sciences, which seeks to help migrants and refugees develop skills that enhance their ability to integrate and navigate everyday challenges, and c) the **Puentes de Palabras Project**, from the Faculty of Communication Sciences, designed to create a native digital media outlet specializing in various topics (politics, economy, society, sports, culture) with a focus on the migrant population, while also developing a style guide for journalists.



SPOTLIGHT ON INCLUSION NEEDS IN EUROPE

Identification and Assessment

Text by Glocal Factory

The inclusion of migrants and refugees requires comprehensive strategies to remove educational, social, and economic barriers. The **Diagnostic Seminar**, held as part of the SL(M) project – led by Maria Carla Italia and Valeria Quartaroli from **Glocal Factory** and Maria Sobrino and Xabier Rodriguez from **Accem** – brought together key stakeholders, including teachers, students, and migrants, to identify the most urgent needs. Its findings served as a roadmap for the pathways developed by the SL(M) project, in which university students collaborate with social organizations and migrant communities to design and implement practical solutions.

Key Findings

1. **Equal treatment** and **non-discrimination** remain a main concern. In particular women, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ individuals, face multiple forms of exclusion.

Access to employment, education, and digital resources should be strengthened to promote more social equity.

2. Many migrants struggle with **job market entry** due to the non-recognition of their degrees, unfamiliarity with local labor culture, and discriminatory hiring practices. Improving awareness of employment rights, offering training opportunities, and providing professional mentoring could help toward a better economic stability.

3. In **education**, language barriers and limited access to formal learning environments significantly hinder integration. Many migrants' children take even on the role of translators for their parents, affecting their own academic progress. Schools must enhance cultural mediation services and develop inclusive learning environments to support them effectively.

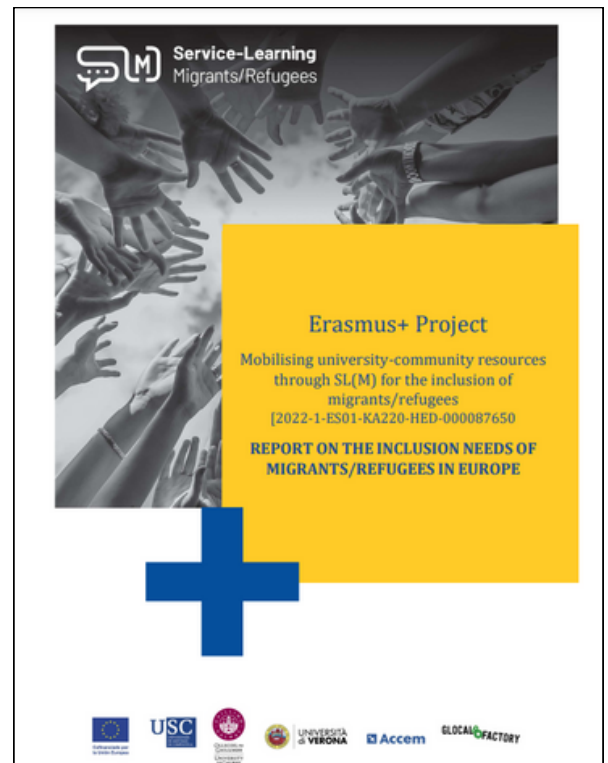
4. **Social inclusion** and **well-being** are also crucial, as migrants often face social isolation, trauma, and bureaucratic obstacles when seeking essential services. Establishing strong support networks and ensuring access to community-based mental health services can help ease their transition into new societies.

5. Many migrants lack knowledge of their **legal rights**, affecting their ability to secure health care, work permits, and residency status. Expanding access to legal assistance and clear, multilingual information is essential in overcoming these barriers.



PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

- **EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT:** developing cultural mediation programs, tailored language learning tools and multilingual resources to support migrant students.
- **EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE:** organizing workshops on job market orientation, CV building and skills recognition to enhance professional integration.
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** creating intercultural spaces where migrants and local citizens can share experiences, strengthening social cohesion and mutual understanding.
- **LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC GUIDANCE:** setting up legal advisory desks to provide migrants with clear, accessible information on residence permits, work authorizations, and asylum procedures.



Read the full
report
<https://service-learning-m.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Report-Inclusion-Needs-Migrant-Refugee.pdf>

SL(M) IN ACTION

Service Learning at the University of Verona

Text by the University of Verona

At the University of Verona, the Service Learning methodology has been applied for many years through initiatives aimed at the Department of Human Sciences students. In 2024, a pilot project was launched in collaboration with the Faculty of Law, focusing on migrants and their needs.

Specifically, this first edition of Service Learning within the **Faculty of Law** involved students, lecturers, and **Avvocato di Strada**, a local association providing free legal advice to homeless people in the city. The students worked directly with immigration lawyer Giacomo Melotti on a real case concerning family reunification.

Through this experience, students could apply the theoretical knowledge acquired during their studies by conducting legal research, preparing legal documents and **providing**

legal assistance at different procedural stages. The project included structured reflection moments, both individually - through drafting a reflective journal - and collectively, during lectures, to critically analyse the actions undertaken and promote a deeper understanding of the issues addressed.

The lessons covered several aspects of **immigration law**, providing a general overview of the regulations on residence permits for family reunification. However, they also touched on less strictly legal topics to encourage a broader reflection on including foreign nationals. Discussions included intercultural issues from an **anthropological perspective**, cultural differences in concepts of marriage and family, and the evolving idea of citizenship.





This pilot project once again demonstrated how collaboration between universities and local organisations can bring mutual benefits. On the one hand, students gained **practical skills** relevant to their potential future careers as legal practitioners or lawyers and a deeper awareness of the social issues linked to migration processes. On the other hand, the association benefited from **concrete support** in managing the case and opened the door to future volunteers who may assist in their legal aid services. Additionally, the project fostered **dialogue** between academia and the local community, encouraging interaction among different stakeholders and strengthening a culture of **shared responsibility**.

“I knew nothing about immigration law; this is the first time I have encountered it at university. I believe it is essential to teach students about the most current aspects of law to prevent them from being influenced solely by the statements of various politicians.”

The students highlighted the significance of this experience in their educational journey. Some of them emphasised that Service Learning enabled them to understand the social role of law better and approach the legal profession with greater awareness. The experience also underscored the need to move beyond a strictly theoretical vision of legal education by integrating activities that promote interaction with the social context.

The University of Verona intends to **continue integrating Service Learning into its academic programmes**, expanding collaborations with local organisations and involving an increasing number of students and lecturers. This methodology represents an opportunity to rethink the relationship between educational training and civic engagement, aiming to contribute to improving the communities in which we live.

Read all the projects

<https://service-learning-m.eu/projects/>

Videos

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1018494723518078>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=661181606244923>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1645670709375146>

A PROCESS OF LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

The SL(M) MOOC

Text by Accem

Training and awareness play a key role in our societies, for this reason we have taken a step forward with the creation of a **MOOC** (Massive Open Online Course) dedicated to: on one side, **familiarise** with International Protection and refugees' situation in Europe, and on the other side, **provide knowledge** about the Service-Learning methodology.

The recording of this MOOC has been an enriching journey involving experts in international law, social workers, communication specialists and digital education specialists. From the initial design phases to the final editing of the content, the project's team has worked with a **multidisciplinary approach** to ensure that the course is not only rigorous in its content but also accessible and engaging for students.

One of the main challenges has been translating complex concepts into an audiovisual format that is both **attractive** and **educational**. The content has been structured into progressive modules that facilitate learning. Also, testimonies, infographics, and practical exercises have been incorporated, allowing participants to assimilate the information dynamically and reflectively.

Challenges and Lessons Learned During the Recording

After weeks of work on the preparation of the videos, the

recordings began with Alessandro Carbone from Glocal Factory, who travelled to Santiago de Compostela to record in the virtual set of the Faculty of Communication Sciences of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

From a technical standpoint, the **virtual set** allowed us to mix reality and **augmented reality** -created and displayed digitally-, this offered the opportunity to record videos in different environments with the possibility of editing the content in real time according to the detailed planning. After the recording, English/Spanish/Italian subtitles have been added to ensure accessibility.

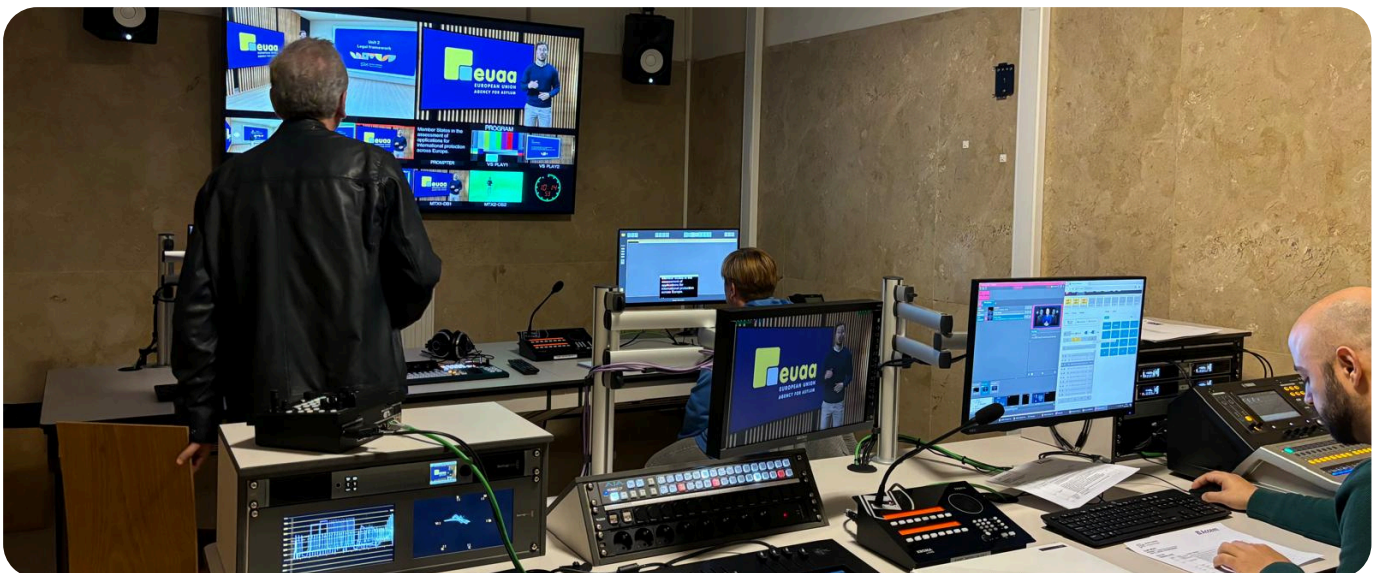


All in all, the virtual video set a technology well-known in broadcasting but very innovative in the learning environments; here the collaboration with communication and design professionals has been crucial to ensuring that the final result meets the expected quality standards.

Impact and Future Perspectives

The launch of this MOOC represents a significant step in Glocal Factory and the Service-Learning Migrants/ Refugees project's mission to raise awareness and educate society about the reality of refugees. The open and free nature of the course allows anyone interested to access it, thus fostering **inclusive and participatory learning**.

In the future, it will be significant to expand the content, incorporate new narratives, update the data and adapt the course to different languages to reach a broader audience. Moreover, the experience gained in this process will serve as a foundation for developing **new courses** on topics related to human mobility and human rights.



A Guide to Best Practices in Service-Learning

As we have already said in the previous pages, the challenges of migration and social inclusion demand innovative and effective responses. We need more than policies and declarations, and SL is a concrete answer that bridge academic knowledge with real-world social impact.

This is where the **Guide to Best Practices** in Service-Learning for Migrant and Refugee Inclusion comes in. Developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Mobilising University-Community Resources through SL(M) for the Inclusion of Migrants/Refugees", this Guide serves as a crucial resource for universities, educators, students, and community organizations committed to fostering integration through education and civic engagement.

At its core, the Guide highlights the value of service-learning methodology, in its connections between **academic knowledge** with **social responsibility**, by actively involving students in community-based projects.

It contains **practical insights** and **concrete examples** of service-learning initiatives that have successfully addressed the needs of migrants and refugees across Europe. It provides procedural frameworks to help universities and organizations implement service-learning effectively, ensuring that both students and community members gain valuable skills, support, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

The principles of **reciprocity**, social support, and **collaborative work** are at the basis, so the Guide contributes to the broader objectives of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, particularly in promoting quality education, reducing inequalities, and fostering inclusive communities.





It also reinforces the role of **universities** as key players in strengthening European civil society and advancing democratic participation.



<https://service-learning-m.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Guide-to-Best-Practices-in-the-University-for-the-Inclusion-of-Migrants-and-Refugees-in-Europe.pdf>


NEWS and EVENTS

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Partners: _____

LOOKING AHEAD The final event of the SL(M) project

This time, instead of looking back at past events, we turn our focus to what lies ahead. Next July, the University of Santiago de Compostela will host the final event of the SL(M) project.

This gathering will mark the culmination of the initiative, featuring the presentation of key results, conferences, talks, and the reunion of all project partners for this last important step. Stay tuned for more details as the date approaches.

Follow SL(M)
<https://service-learning-m.eu/>

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