



IJRSLCE

International Journal
of Research on
Service-Learning &
Community Engagement

Volume 13 | Issue 1

Evolving Frameworks in Global Service-Learning and Community Engagement: An Introduction to Issue 13

Morgan Lewing

International Journal of Research on Service-Learning & Community Engagement, Texas A&M University-Central Texas

Becca Berkey

International Journal of Research on Service-Learning & Community Engagement, Northeastern University

Recommended Citation

Lewing, M., & Berkey, B. (2026). Evolving frameworks in global service-learning and community engagement: An introduction to issue 13. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.37333/001c.155267>

Evolving Frameworks in Global Service-Learning and Community Engagement: An Introduction to Issue 13

Morgan Lewing, and Becca Berkey

Abstract

Co-Editors **Morgan Lewing** and **Becca Berkey** introduce Volume 13 of the *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* during a period marked by renewed global attention to equity, community voice, and culturally grounded approaches to engagement. This issue reflects the expanding international scope and methodological diversity of the field, bringing together various theoretical frameworks, institutionalization processes, student transformation across diverse cultural and faith contexts, community-level outcomes, and global models of university–community partnership. In light of the 2025, *International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* global convening and the development of the Global Research Agenda, the articles in this volume highlight both emerging challenges and promising directions for service-learning and community engagement (SLCE) scholarship. Collectively, the contributions advance a vision of SLCE that is equity-centered, contextually responsive, and globally connected.

Keywords: *community partnerships, equity, global contexts, institutionalization, service-learning and community engagement, student outcomes, theory and methodology*

Marcos de referencia en evolución del aprendizaje y servicio global y la participación comunitaria: Una introducción al número 13

Morgan Lewing y Becca Berkey

Resumen

Los coeditores Morgan Lewing y Becca Berkey presentan el Volumen 13 de la Revista Internacional de Investigación sobre Aprendizaje y Servicio y Participación Comunitaria en un período marcado por una renovada atención global a la equidad, la voz comunitaria y enfoques de participación con una base cultural. Este número refleja el crecimiento del alcance internacional y diversidad metodológica de este campo de investigación, recoge diversos marcos teóricos, procesos de institucionalización, transformación estudiantil en diversos contextos culturales y religiosos, resultados a nivel comunitario y modelos globales de colaboración universidad-comunidad. A partir de la conferencia global de Asociación Internacional para la Investigación sobre el Aprendizaje-Servicio y la Participación Comunitaria 2025 y el desarrollo de la Agenda Global de Investigación, los artículos de este volumen destacan tanto los desafíos emergentes como direcciones prometedoras para la investigación de Aprendizaje y Servicio y Participación Comunitaria (SLCE) (por sus siglas en inglés). En conjunto, estas contribuciones promueven una visión del aprendizaje y servicio y participación comunitaria centrada en la equidad, sensible al contexto y con conexión global.

Palabras clave: *Aprendizaje y servicio y participación comunitaria, equidad, institucionalización, resultados estudiantiles, alianzas comunitarias, contextos globales, teoría y metodología*

*Editors' Note: Translation provided by **Karla Diaz**
Instituto de Aprendizaje y Servicio, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador*

Introduction

Over the past year, the field of service-learning and community engagement (SLCE) has continued to adapt and expand in response to shifting global realities from growing calls for social and educational equity to the need for culturally attuned, community-centered practices that acknowledge diversity across contexts. Issue 13 brings together a broad set of empirical studies, theoretical reflections, and practice-informed accounts highlighting the vitality and variability of SLCE across nations, institutions, and communities. The contributions collectively emphasize how SLCE can serve as a meaningful vehicle for social justice, institutional transformation, and cross-cultural learning.

This moment holds special significance for the international SLCE community, given that our parent organization, *International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* (IARSLCE), convened its 2025 global gathering. The convening included the Opening Plenary and a Global Scholars session, bringing together long-time and emerging researchers from around the world to chart the future trajectory of SLCE in light of contemporary global challenges. In this context, the 2025 Global Research Agenda development also gained renewed momentum, stressing shared yet context-sensitive priorities for research and practice internationally. This issue of the journal thus aims to mirror that spirit by foregrounding scholarship that is locally grounded, globally aware, and oriented toward equitable and sustainable engagement.

The collection of articles in this volume manifests several core themes that together underscore the evolving identity and ambitions of the field. First, many contributions tackle equity, inclusion, and responsiveness across global contexts, exploring how SLCE are adapted to diverse cultural, institutional, and social settings to better meet local needs. Another recurring focus on institutionalization, sustainability, and structural change draws attention to how SLCE initiatives can move beyond ad hoc projects toward being embedded in the long-term fabric of educational institutions. Third, a strong emphasis on community and partner voice, reciprocity, and shared impact reflects a growing commitment to collaborative, respectful relationships that value community knowledge and agency as essential to meaningful engagement. This issue also showcases methodological innovation and interdisciplinary approaches, with studies employing diverse methods and drawing on disciplines ranging from education to social justice, public health, and community development. Finally, the work illustrates global–local dynamics: contextual adaptation paired with shared learning, where local insights contribute to broader global conversations, and cross-contextual analyses help build a collective sense of purpose and direction in SLCE.

Advances in Theory and Methodology

It features four articles that address critical gaps in SLCE scholarship through innovative methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks. Together, these contributions respond to longstanding calls for greater theoretical rigor and methodological sophistication in the field, offering scholars new tools and perspectives for understanding how community engagement becomes embedded in educational institutions and practice.

Nuria Cuenca-Soto, L. Fernando Martínez-Muñoz, Erin Murphy-Graham, and M^a Luisa Santos-Pastor conducted a scoping review of 44 studies examining Feminist Service-Learning and Critical Feminist Service-Learning as pedagogical models centered on equity and social justice. Their analysis reveals how these approaches challenge traditional power dynamics and foster reciprocal university–community partnerships, while also identifying persistent institutional barriers and gaps in understanding community-level outcomes. The authors call for more participatory evaluation methods and sustained inquiry into how feminist frameworks can transform both educational practices and community engagement outcomes.

Wilmer Hernan Cruz Gutierrez demonstrates the utility of topic modeling—a natural language processing technique—for synthesizing large bodies of service-learning literature. Analyzing 354 documents from the Scopus database, Cruz Gutierrez uncovers latent themes and patterns that reveal an institutionalization model grounded in social justice principles. This model emphasizes attention to local contexts, stakeholder participation, frameworks of social responsibility, and the cultivation of critically

aware citizens, offering researchers a data-driven approach to understanding conceptual developments across the field.

Andrew Pearl, Cammie Jones-Friedrichs, Elaine Ward, Henry R. Cunningham, Jennifer M. Azordegan, Tabatha Cruz, Felicia Deas, Emily Locke, Tania D. Mitchell, Tanvi V. Padalkar, Diana Quito, and Carol Cutler White present a comprehensive methodological guide for scholars working with the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement dataset. With 368 institutions currently holding this classification and the recent establishment of the Carnegie Elective Classifications Research Lab as an international collaborative network, the authors outline how researchers can access and utilize this rich dataset. Their guide maps current research directions and identifies promising avenues for future inquiry into institutionalized community engagement in higher education.

Genejane M. Adarlo, Mark Anthony D. Abenir, Sabrina Kate D. Paner-Montiel, Syra Marie Norin A. Petalio, Rose Clarence C. Co, Eduardo Victor J. Valdez, Ma. Lourdes Oliveros, and Maria Criselda T. Torcuator contribute important evidence for cross-cultural measurement reliability by testing the S-LOMS-SV instrument with Filipino undergraduates. Their work addresses whether assessment tools developed in one cultural context maintain their psychometric integrity when applied elsewhere. The research confirms that the scale's four dimensions—knowledge application, personal and professional skills, civic orientation and engagement, and self-awareness—function effectively in the Philippine context, though the authors note opportunities for refinement of specific items. By establishing the instrument's reliability beyond its original East Asian development context and demonstrating its capacity to detect meaningful differences across student populations, this validation study expands researchers' toolkit for conducting comparative international research on service-learning outcomes.

Student Outcomes

It presents seven articles examining how service-learning experiences shape learners across diverse educational and cultural contexts. These studies collectively demonstrate that thoughtfully designed community engagement fosters multifaceted development—from pedagogical competencies and professional readiness to ethical sensibilities and spiritual growth. The articles span teacher education programs in Malaysia and Spain, an Islamic higher education institution in South Africa, and Catholic secondary schools in Australia, revealing both universal patterns and context-specific dimensions of student transformation through community-engaged learning.

Yee Ling Lee, Vinothini Vasodavan, and Revati Ramakrishnan examine purpose-led pedagogy in teacher education through a refugee community engagement project involving 20 preservice teachers who delivered instruction to 223 students at alternative learning centers in Malaysia. Their analysis of student artifacts, video recordings, and reflective materials reveals how preservice teachers developed classroom management capabilities, built meaningful relationships with refugee students, and cultivated global awareness and empathy. The findings point toward a transformative model for teacher preparation that centers on community-based, inclusive educational practices.

Prado Martín-Ondarza, Paloma Redondo-Corcobado, Beatriz Gálvez Martín, and Juan Luis Fuentes investigated three service-learning initiatives within initial teacher training at Complutense University of Madrid using a mixed-methods approach. Their research demonstrates how service-learning contributes to curricular mastery, ethical–civic development, and professional growth while enhancing communication and interpersonal competencies. Students reported high satisfaction and motivation levels, identifying critical reflection as the essential connector between academic learning, community service, and professional identity formation. The authors position service-learning as a vehicle for preparing educators committed to social transformation and educational equity.

Saleemah Jaffer and Abdullah Bayat studied 48 students in a community-based participatory action research and service-learning module at an Islamic private higher education institution, applying Mezirow's transformative learning framework to analyze student experiences. Their findings reveal that action research-grounded service-learning catalyzes transformative learning while developing agency, empathy, and Futuwah—an Islamic ethical concept encompassing virtuous character and service to others. This

research contributes important insights into how service-learning intersects with faith-based values and spiritual development in Muslim students.

Salvatore De Luca, Shane Lavery, and Dianne Chambers conducted an instrumental case study with 261 Year 11 students across four Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia, centering student voice in understanding the benefits of Christian service learning. Through surveys and focus group interviews with 26 students, they identified four key benefit areas: positive personal attributes, individual growth, learning opportunities, and civic responsibility. This study addresses a notable gap in the literature by privileging student perspectives on how faith-integrated service-learning shapes their development and understanding of community responsibility.

Antony Sindone, Sean Kearney, and Thuan Thai examined the impact of domestic and international service learning on servant leadership development among young adults in Jesuit education and social ministry programs across Australia. Using a quasiexperimental design with 60 participants who completed the servant leadership behavior scale before and after seven service-learning experiences of varying durations in Australia, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines, the study documented statistically significant growth across six servant leadership attributes grounded in Greenleaf's theory: voluntary subordination, covenantal relationships, authentic self, responsible morality, transforming influence, and transcendental spirituality. The findings reveal that both short- and long-term service-learning experiences cultivate ethically driven, socially responsible leadership, with international placements showing slightly stronger developmental effects than domestic programs.

Enrique Latorre-Ruiz, Diego Allen-Perkins, and Guadalupe Jiménez-Esquinas describe a service-learning initiative at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela that integrated gender perspectives and social memory through partnership with the Centro de Documentación en Igualdade e Feminismos del Consello da Cultura Galega. Students in philosophy and social anthropology engaged in critical analysis of feminist-queer archives to recover and reinterpret marginalized historical narratives that challenge dominant stories erasing the contributions of women and LGBTQI+ movements. Through training sessions, archival research, and public outreach via presentations and social media, students demonstrated significant growth in critical thinking, research competencies, and ethical awareness as measured through focus groups, observations, and rubrics. The project illustrates how service-learning centered on feminist and LGBTQI+ histories can advance educational innovation while promoting social justice and inclusive citizenship.

Mercedes Llorent-Vaquero, Elena M.^a Díaz-Pareja, Juana M.^a Ortega-Tudela, and Bárbara de las Heras Monastero explored the integration of Instagram and other social media platforms into service-learning projects with nearly 300 education students at the University of Jaén in Spain. Using a quantitative, descriptive-comparative methodology, their research demonstrates that service-learning significantly enhances student motivation, active participation, and social awareness, while social media amplifies project visibility and impact. Students reported that Instagram facilitated communication, idea sharing, peer collaboration, and real-time instructor feedback, making their learning experiences more dynamic and interactive. The findings confirm that combining service-learning with digital platforms cultivates creativity, innovation, and technological competencies essential for future educators, while strengthening professional and civic development.

Community Partnerships and Impacts

It features two articles that examine how service-learning initiatives generate social value and foster collaborative relationships between higher education institutions and communities. These studies employ distinct methodological lenses—one synthesizing existing research across the field and another analyzing gender dimensions of community participation—to illuminate both what we know about community-level outcomes and critical gaps in how we measure and understand the reciprocal benefits of engagement partnerships.

Iris Lumillo, Anna Escofet, Montserrat Solà, and Victoria Morín-Fraile conducted a scoping review of 43 studies published between 1999 and 2023 to map evidence regarding the social impact of university

service learning on citizens and community organizations. Their systematic analysis across five databases reveals how existing research documents collaboration opportunities between educational and social spheres, emphasizing cocreation and community building. While the review identifies various tools, indicators, and methodologies used to assess impact from community participants' perspectives, the authors highlight a critical need for longitudinal quantitative studies with validated instruments and representative samples that can capture long-term effects and expand our understanding of community-level outcomes.

Abdullah R. Sirad, Shiny Rose S. Narit, Charlyn M. Capulong, Safa D. Manala-O, Rosario L. Reserva, and Lawrence Jay M. Cañete explore gender-based differences in skills development and participation within sustainable development goal (SDG)-driven university extension projects. Through analysis of 126 community participants using descriptive statistics, *t* tests, and multiple linear regression, their research reveals that women participate more frequently in SDG initiatives, underscoring their vital role in community development efforts. While both genders report positive skills enhancement, men indicate slightly higher perceived skills development. The findings emphasize the importance of inclusive engagement strategies and targeted support mechanisms to maximize project impact, demonstrating how state university extension initiatives can effectively cultivate community capacities while advancing sustainable development objectives.

International Service-Learning and Community Engagement Research

It presents three articles that foreground voices and contexts often marginalized in the predominantly Western-centered scholarship on community–university partnerships. These studies examine service-learning and engagement practices in Southeastern Europe and South Africa, and India offering critical insights into how cultural, political, and systemic contexts shape both the implementation and outcomes of community-engaged initiatives. Together, they expand our understanding of community–university relationships beyond familiar contexts, while demonstrating how engagement can address pressing local challenges and build capacity for development.

Carmen Luca Sugawara, Dinka Caha, and Kim Hea-Won examine community–university engagement (CUE) from the perspectives of 211 community partners across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo. Using a validated measure of local capacity for community development, their study addresses a significant gap in the literature by documenting community stakeholders' experiences and their perceptions of how university partnerships contribute to local development. The findings amplify community voices from Southeastern Europe, regions underrepresented in CUE scholarship, and illuminate the role of university engagement in strengthening communities' developmental capacities amid growing inequality and social fragmentation.

Kelly Long and Ashley Westaway present a case study of a city-wide service-learning initiative developed through partnership between Rhodes University and GADRA Education in Makhanda, South Africa. The program embeds final-year Bachelor of Education students in comprehensive reading assessments of all Grade 4 learners, simultaneously addressing South Africa's early literacy crisis and the scarcity of reliable assessment data in primary schools while developing preservice teachers' assessment literacy, pedagogical competencies, and critical awareness of local educational realities. Grounded in Chambers and Lavery's framework for effective service-learning, the initiative collected data from over 2000 learners in 2023 and 2024, revealing persistent disparities in reading comprehension across school quintiles and languages of instruction. The authors' key contribution lies in demonstrating how preservice teachers can function not only as learners but as vital human resources in responding to educational crises when service-learning is anchored in authentic, reciprocal partnerships that cultivate socially responsive professional identities.

Wafa Singh, Raisuyah Bhagwan, and Manju Singh adopt a holistic, multifaceted perspective to explore how universities in India can transform into community-engaged institutions. Through an in-depth qualitative study involving 50 academics across eight Indian universities, the research moves beyond documenting individual programs to examine the interconnected stakeholders, processes, and mechanisms that contribute to building engaged universities. Their findings identify three critical dimensions for

realizing the engaged university vision: cultural determinants, structural elements, and functional processes. Drawing on these insights from the Indian higher education context, the authors propose a conceptual framework to guide institutional transformation, offering valuable direction for policymakers, university leaders, and academics seeking to advance engagement within their institutional landscapes.

Book Reviews

It features one contribution examining recent scholarship significant to the SLCE field. This section provides critical analysis of published works that advance our understanding of civic education, community engagement pedagogy, and the sociopolitical contexts shaping these practices.

Megan L. Ramlo reviews *The Rise and Fall of Civic Education: The Battle for Social Studies in a Shifting Historical Landscape* by Michael Learn, a work that traces the enduring ideological conflicts surrounding civic education in the United States. Ramlo highlights Learn's robust historical research and attention to sociocultural contexts, which illuminate how foundational arguments have shaped contemporary social studies curriculum and pedagogy—including ongoing culture wars. While praising the book's value for those committed to advancing civic education, Ramlo identifies a critical gap: the absence of social studies teachers' voices in these debates. The review argues that practitioner perspectives represent a necessary but overlooked dimension in understanding and resolving battles over civic education's purpose and practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Issue 13 of *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* demonstrates the field's growing maturity, global breadth, and deepening commitment to justice, equity, and sustainability in community engagement. The articles assembled here reflect not only rigorous scholarship but also a conscious orientation toward socially responsive and community-centered action aligning with the goals articulated in the 2025 IARSLCE Global Research Agenda. We believe these contributions will enrich ongoing conversations, inspire new collaborations, and inform institutional and community practices that are inclusive, sustainable, and transformative.

As we look forward, this volume stands as both a celebration of past progress and a call to future work. We hope readers (i.e., scholars, practitioners, and community partners) will engage with these studies not merely as discrete contributions but as part of a broader, collective movement to advance SLCE worldwide. We invite the field to build on these themes: to deepen research that centers equity, to sustain institutional support for engagement, to amplify community voice, to embrace methodological and disciplinary breadth, and to forge connections that bridge local and global contexts. May this issue serve as a springboard for continued innovation, solidarity, and shared commitment to SLCE for the years ahead.

Acknowledgements

The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IJRSLCE) is a publication of the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement (IARSLCE). The mission of IARSLCE is to promote the development and dissemination of research on service-learning and community engagement internationally and across all levels of the education system.

Currently published annually, IJRSLCE provides a venue for high-quality, transdisciplinary, and multimodal research focused on service-learning, campus–community engagement, and the promotion of active, effective citizenship through education. IARSLCE and IJRSLCE are committed to building the capacity of scholars, practitioners, and community partners to engage in such research.

Senior Editorial Team

Morgan Lewing	Texas A&M University-Central Texas (Texas, U.S.)
Becca Berkey	Northeastern University (Massachusetts, U.S.)
Drew Pearl	Kansas State University (Kansas, U.S.)

Immediate Past Editor

Susan Harris	University of Southern California (California, U.S.)
--------------	--

Section Editors

Mark Anthony D. Abenir	Anteneo de Manila University (Manila, Philippines)
Sarah Brackman	Georgia Tech University (Georgia, U.S.)
Henry R. Cunningham	University of Louisville (Kentucky, U.S.)
Lauren Dinour	Montclair State University (New Jersey, U.S.)
Antonio G. Estudillo	Heritage University (Washington, U.S.)
Karla Díaz Freire	Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Quito, Ecuador)
Phillip Motley	Elon University (North Carolina, U.S.)
Grace Ngai	Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Hong Kong, China)
University of Canterbury	

Reviewers

The editorial team would like to thank the many practitioners and scholars who volunteer their time and expertise as peer reviewers, providing thorough evaluations of the many manuscripts submitted for consideration in IJRSLCE. Their commitment to providing substantive feedback and timely manuscript review is what underpins this publication's commitment to quality and integrity

Abderrahim Agnaou, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane
Ryan Albright, Tulane University
Gina Annunziato Dow, Denison University
Jenny Barke, University of Exeter
Mac Benavides, Kansas State University
Angela Clark-Taylor, St. John Fisher College
Thomas A. Dahan, Rutgers University–Camden
Brian Davenport, Eastern Washington University
Antonio Estudillo, Heritage University
Juan Garcia-Gutierrez, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
Larissa Horne, University of the Fraser Valley
Angela James, University of Kwazulu-Natal
Hing Lau, Hong Kong Baptist University
Jessica Mann, Duquesne University
Nina Namaste, Elon University
Sydney Nicolla, Elon University
Kristin Norris, Indiana University System
Ania S Payne, Kansas State University
Jeane Peracullo, De La Salle University
Drew Pearl, Kansas State University
Lisa Marie Portugal
Billy Osteen, University of Canterbury
Star Plaxton-Moore, Stanford University
Dan Richard, University of North Florida

Gabriela Salcedo Raza, Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Lorilee Sandmann, University of Georgia
Leyla Savloff, Elon University
Evan Small, Elon University
Krista Soria, University of Idaho
Sharon Valarmathi, Christ University
Veronica Yopez-Reyes, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador

Special thanks to Suchitra Raghavalu (Amnet) for managing the copyediting and formatting of final drafts for Volume 13.

About the Authors

Morgan Lewing is an Associate Professor of Higher Education Leadership Texas A&M University-Central Texas.

Becca Berkey is the Senior Director of Integrative Engagement & Global ImpactCommunity-Engaged Teaching & Research.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Morgan Lewing at Morgan.Lewing@tamuct.edu and Becca Berkey at r.berkey@northeastern.edu.